



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

SINTRAM
A NORTHERN
DRAMA.

BY A GRADUATE OF BALLIOL

23478.725



PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS
LONDON, W.C.

Messrs KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & C

With the Compliments of the AUTHOR.

23498.725

11.





SINTRAM

A NORTHERN DRAMA

S I N T R A M

A NORTHERN DRAMA

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

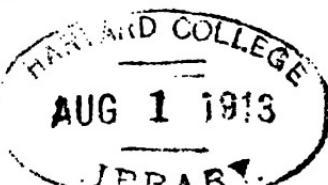
A GRADUATE OF BALLIOL

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & CO. LTD
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1895

~~23498.107~~
23498. 725



Subscription fund

All rights reserved

*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
Edinburgh and London*

If yet your world is gay and lit with smiles,
And never have ye watched in helpless woe
While life from fondest heart was ebbing slow ;
Nor trod the weary road where naught beguiles,
And cares on cares succeeding mark the miles ;
Nor seen the fairy palace fallen low
That youth and wealth and joy had built ; and
know
Of inward struggles naught, nor tempter's wiles :
Read not this book, but haste, while yet ye may,
To make you merry in your little light,
And as the painted moth to take your flight
Thro' the brief sunshine of a single day ;
But onward read all ye, and with me stay,
Who know the paths of sorrow and of night.

SINTRAM
A NORTHERN DRAMA

*The scene is laid in Norway towards the close
of the eleventh century. An interval of six years
elapses between the 1st and 2nd Acts, and of
twelve years between the 4th and 5th Acts.*

Dramatis Personæ.

BIORN, *Lord of Drontheim in Norway.*

SINTRAM, *his son.*

FOLKO, *Lord of Montfaucon in Normandy.*

ENGELTRAM, *his son.*

ERIC, *Earl of Hamar in Norway.*

ASTOLFO, *a Sicilian doctor.*

ROLF, *a squire in attendance on Sintram.*

A CHAPLAIN.

A HERMIT.

A FISHERMAN, *and his sons RURIC and OTTO.*

The WARDEN of the Moonrock Castle.

A HERALD.

GUTHRED, *a peasant.*

THORA, *daughter of Biorn.*

GABRIELLE, *wife of Folko.*

FISHERMAN'S WIFE, *and her daughters ULRICA and
ULLA.*

An EVIL SPIRIT, *known some time as the LITTLE
MASTER.*

A LOST SOUL.

DEATH.

SEVEN ANGELS.

*Knights, Ladies, Squires, Pages, Soldiers, Servants,
Peasants, Children.*

SINTRAM

ACT I.

SCENE I.—BIORN's *Castle near Drontheim.*
BIORN and many Knights at a banquet.
ROLF and the CHAPLAIN converse apart.
Storm without.

ROLF.

Hearken how the wind is raging,
And the iron bolts are rattling ;
Nay, the solid vault of stone
Seems to quaver, and the arches
Wailing answer with a moan.

CHAPLAIN.

Neither care to me nor terror
Outward nature brings, but only
Inward passions fierce and bold,
Driving storms of rage and cruelty,
Hearts grown hard and love grown cold.

ROLF.

Sounds like these are more than nature's,
Sounds unearthly, sounds foreboding
 Evil on some guilty head.
Ah ! why stare the guests so strangely ?
 Cometh spectre from the dead ?
[Enter SINTRAM *wildly as though pursued, and clings to BIORN.*]

SINTRAM.

Father, close behind me Death
Follows, and his icy breath
 Chills all my frame ;
Creeps another close beside,
 I cannot name.
Would that I had rather died
 Than lived to hear
That step so near.
 O knight and father !
Help thy son,
 Or I had rather
Life were done.

Ah ! that Other worse than Death
Nameless horror threateneth.
Help me, father !

ROLF.

Little help his earthly father
For unearthly strife can give him ;
Haste thyself to speak with power,
Bid the evil spirits quit him,
Waiting not the morning hour.

[Followed by ROLF, the Chaplain says a
prayer over SINTRAM, who suffers
himself to be led away. *Exeunt*
SINTRAM, ROLF, and CHAPLAIN.]

BIORN.

Pardon, noble knights of Norway,
That the gladness of our feasting
For a moment hath been stayed
By my son all dazed and moonstruck,
Like a girl of dreams afraid.
Each returning Yule-tide sees him
Smitten with these wild delusions ;
Since his fifth year it is so :

Soon 'tis past, nor worth remembrance ;
Let the wine and voices flow.
[All keep silent. The storm rages ever
more fiercely.]
Nay, shake off this childish terror.
Doth a boy of twelve years fright you,
Lords and warriors of the North ?
Songs can now be sung the merrier
That the chaplain hath gone forth.
First I call upon thee, Ivar,
As the youngest knight among us,
For a song of love, of laughter ;
Then Knight Harald, chanting sweetly
Lays of old, shall follow after.

YOUNG KNIGHT [*singing*].

A maiden there lived by the shores of the sea,
And a maiden so fair she was destined for me ;
Her lips were as roses, her locks were as gold,
Her voice sounded softer than ere can be told.
I sought her, I wooed her ; she laughed me to
scorn :
“ For one yet is living, disgraced and forlorn,
To whom the same words as to me thou hast said,

And another, thou false-hearted youth, she is
dead."

Who told her I knew not—

[*His voice is drowned by the storm.*]

Sing in such a storm I cannot,
Storm that seems to mock our feasting ;
Nor can sing of joys and love,
Where I hear so strangely sounding
Moanings from the vault above.

OLD KNIGHT.

Biorn, neither songs nor jesting
Forth can drive the darkening horror,
Gloom that evermore doth thicken ;
Thou must tell the dreadful story
Why thine only son is stricken.

BIORN.

Listen then, my silent warriors.
Would ye hear the hidden story ?
Know that nothing ye shall hear,
Nothing !—And if this affright you,
Call the chaplain in your fear.

[*Springing up wildly.*]

Ha ! ha ! the whirlwind rages o'er the snow ;
Ha ! ha ! the hounds of hell have slipped their
chains,
And rush from out the fiery gulfs below,
And naked Death stalks shivering thro' the
plain.
My comrades wild they call me ; bring quick
my horse, my horse,
And thro' the frozen night we'll speed our
headlong course.

[*Exit BIORN. All the guests rise in confusion.*]

OLD KNIGHT.

Let us hence ; I will not tarry
In this evil-haunted castle.
Better face the drift of snow
Than beneath a roof take shelter
That God's blessing doth not know.

SCENE II.—SINTRAM'S sleeping-room. SINTRAM lies asleep. At his bedside sit ROLF and the CHAPLAIN.

CHAPLAIN.

If no promise bids thy silence,
Tell me all the secret story,
Now that Sintram sleeps so fast,
Breathes so gently, witness giving
That his frightful dreams are past.

ROLF.

'Twas the holy eve of Christmas
Eight long years ago, and Biorn
Seemed all girt around with joy :
Wife the gentlest, daughters fairest,
And his yet untroubled boy.
Ever in his wars triumphant,
First in fame of Norway's chieftains ;
But alas ! had counsel taken
With wild spirits, ill enduring
That the old gods were forsaken.
Priest within his castle never

Would he suffer long to linger,
And the merchants, men of peace,
These he hated and their counsels
That the rude old ways should cease.
Then the Christmas came, and with it,
Came his friends in ill adventures ;
Out the boar's-head cup was brought,
Remnant of the pagan worship,
Made of gold most strangely wrought.
Vows they vowed the boar's-head grasping,
Some of love and some of vengeance ;
Ah ! and Biorn, cup in hand,
Swore to slay the stranger merchants,
All that on his coast might land.
Scarce the evil words were spoken,
Stood a warder in the doorway :
“ Merchants two from Holstein's shore,
Tempest-driven to your harbour,
Stand without and help implore.”
Horror-stricken stood Sir Biorn,
Strove a moment, strove too feebly,
Sank beneath the demon's power.
“ By the oath that I have uttered,
Die they shall within this hour :

Bring them, pierce them with your lances." Grace I had the words to murmur : " Must not such command obey." "Get thee to the women's quarters," Answered he, "and there may'st pray." As I went I saw two figures, One was tall, of death-like pallor, Seemed all bones,—I marked him well ; Small the other, and his visage Frightful like a fiend from hell.
[SINTRAM starts up wildly in his sleep.]

CHAPLAIN.

Stay, for Sintram in his slumber Starts in dreadful fear and shudders.

[They soothe him.]

ROLF.

Lest we raise these dreams again,
Let me tell no more the aspect
Of those dread companions twain.
Then I quickly sought Verena,
Mistress mine and his sweet mother,
Clouded now her face with woe,

Sadly gazing in the moonlight
On the crowded court below.
Death awaiting knelt the merchants,
Death preparing stood the spearmen,
And I saw a serpent writhe
Round them, and upraised above them
Fleshless hand that held a scythe.
Then like warning bell in tempest
Clear Verena's voice resounded :
“ Think upon thine only son,
Spare for him these men, and steadfast
Stand against the Evil One.”
Back Sir Biorn spoke in anger,
Bid her cease, and in his madness
Swore an oath : “ If these men live,
Sintram o'er to death and devil
By the golden boar I give.”

[*SINTRAM groans.*]

From his eyes red flames came leaping,—
Knight the flame-eyed thence they call him,—
And to strike and slay he bade ;
But aloft with hands uplifted,
“ Saviour, help ! ” Verena prayed.
In an instant fled the spectres,

And the spearmen, blindly reeling,
Struck their weapons all in vain ;
Open burst the gate, and safely
Stood the strangers on the plain ;
Gained their battered ship, and slowly
Reached at last a friendly haven.
They were gone, but we within
Quickly must begin the reaping
Of the harvest of our sin.
Those two hideous phantoms mounted
Silent to the turret chamber
Where lay Sintram sweetly sleeping.
“Rolf, didst see,” Verena whispered,
“Ghastly comrades upward creeping ?”
Numbed with fear we stood a moment,
Then we followed, ill foreboding ;
Sintram found, as e'en this night,
Like to one from evil spirits
Fleeing away in mad affright.
Thro' the wintry nights returning
Thrice the dreadful dreams o'ertook him,
Left him wan and sad and weak ;
Back each Christmas season coming
Seem his very life to seek.

Other times he fears no danger,
All too bold he is and reckless,
 Must be such in home so wild ;
Yet all love him for the likeness
 Of the mother in the child.
Ah ! his mother ! Scarce my faltering
Voice can tell the tale of sorrow,
 For I knew her from her birth,
Serving in her father's castle,
 Knew her in the days of mirth.
And when Biorn came and courted,
Most renowned of Norway's chieftains,
 Came and bore his bride away,
I was chosen by her father
 In her retinue to stay.
Other now the days and dismal ;
Whether she her life had offered
 For those strangers, or that God,
Secret ways of grace contriving,
 Willed to end the path she trod :
Scarcely from his dreams of horror
Sintram rose, when sweet Verena
 Fell, by piercing pains assailed ;
All our care and tender watching

For that sickness naught availed.
Then a great physician coming
From Salerno's sunny waters
Spoke and sadly sentence gave :
Naught from death, all quick approaching,
Our sweet lady more could save.
Daily grew the wound, devouring
All her strength, and past all healing ;
In her heart was wound yet worse.
Ever wilder grew Sir Biorn,
Smitten with his guilty curse.
Then at last to her entreaties
Biorn yielded, that their daughters
From that home so God-forsaken
To their Norman friends and kinsfolk
O'er the western sea be taken.
But the boy he kept beside him.
Then Verena gently called me,
And I swore on bended knee
To the child, as true love knoweth,
Father, mother, both to be.
In the haven stood the vessel,
In her room the daughters lingered,
Gentle breezes fanned the bay :

Must be borne the mournful message,
Time it was to speed away.
Then she spoke so sweet and sadly :
“ Let us not our sorrow lengthen ;
Keep a true and loving heart,
Lean upon the couch and give me
One more kiss before we part.”
One last glance they took and left her,
Never more to see that mother.
Quickly ebbed her strength, till came
Hour long foreseen, when gently
Flickered out life’s feeble flame.
Ah ! the anguish of that hour,
Who can tell it, or when Sintram
Asked with wistful look of pain :
“ Why doth mother lie so silent ;
Will she never speak again ? ”

CHAPLAIN.

Nay, take comfort, for this mother
Watches faithful o’er her children ;
Death but little can destroy.
Look ! her child’s face, as we name her,
Shows a radiant smile of joy.

SCENE III.—*Great Hall.* BIORN standing alone. Enter SINTRAM.

BIORN.

Where is Rolf?

SINTRAM.

I know not, father ;
We were parted 'mid the mountains.

BIORN.

Then before this day is done
Twenty spears shall pierce his body,
Guarding ill mine only son.

SINTRAM.

First your only son must perish,
For my Rolf I love and need him,
And your spearmen's every dart
First must pierce this breast unworthy
Ere it reach his faithful heart.

BIORN.

Is it so ? Then life I grant him,
But as exile from my castle.

SINTRAM.

Then as exile I will go
Rolf to serve o'er land and water,
Love and loyalty to show.

BIORN.

Is it so? Seems then this squire
Here must stay.

SINTRAM.

E'en so it seemeth.

BIORN.

Cam'st thou all alone?

SINTRAM.

There came
Pilgrim strange, who said he knew thee.
Need was none to tell his name.
'Mid the snow-clad mountains riding,
Rolf and I, we heard, astonished,
Hollow rattling, piteous moans;
Pale and gaunt, uprose a stranger,
All his robes were deck'd with bones.

"Say, what dost thou here?" I asked
him.

Thro' his chattering teeth he answered :
"Death is all my life."—"What mean
Bones hung round thee?"—"Relics gathered
Far and near where I have been."—
"Pilgrim then thou art, and must not
Perish here, but mount behind me."

"Mount I will," he said, and sprang
Quick behind me, making rattle
All the bones with horrid clang.
At the sound, my horse, affrighted,
Onward dashed, I could not hold him ;
Rolf to follow tried in vain ;
Many a frozen stream we'd traversed
When at last I spoke again :
"Gird thy garments closer, pilgrim,
Then the bones less loud will rattle ;
Clasp thine ice-cold arms less tight,
Breathe not ice-cold breath upon me,
Then I'll check my courser's flight."
Loos'ning not his hold, he answered :
"Bones must rattle, 'tis their custom ;
Grips not yet mine hand thine heart ;

Nor my breath thy blood yet freezes ;
 See the place where we must part.”
 Then I saw, with mighty wondering,
 We were close before the castle,
 Panting stood my steed half dead ;
 Down all nimbly sprang the stranger,
 And with voice of warning said :
 “ Give my greeting to thy father,
 Biorn with the eyes of fire,
 Well I know him, all too well ;
 Many a day my work he worketh,
 Need is none my name to tell.
 Need’st but tell him of my garments,
 He will know me—all shall know me.”
 Then like silent shadow creeping
 He was gone, and in the hamlet
 Passing bell I heard and weeping.

BIORN.

Truth he spoke, for well I know him ;
 Now go rest thyself, my son ;
 Rolf shall meet with kindly cheer ;
 Nay, if soon he come not homeward,
 Shall be sought for far and near.

SCENE IV.—*The same.* BIORN seated with
the LITTLE MASTER, who is clad in a loose
robe hung with bones.

BIORN.

Tell me, why this strange apparel,
Trailing robe with bones embroidered?
These belong to him who goes
With me when in battle raging
Death I scatter 'mid my foes.

LITTLE MASTER.

Many garments, many figures,
Many voices, strange disguises,
As occasion calls, I borrow:
Sit with thee to-day and trifle,
Holy Writ expound to-morrow.
Robes of Death I wear them only
With a friend to me o'ergiven,
Bound by ties to last unbroken;
Death and I for him are brothers,
Borrowed robe doth this betoken.

[Enter SINTRAM.]

SINTRAM.

Rolf hath told me, strangest pilgrim,
Thou wert sitting with my father,
After yesterday's wild ride.
I have come to give thee greeting,
Well thou didst my horse bestride.

LITTLE MASTER [*uneasily*].

Naught I know of what ye tell me.

SINTRAM.

Thou art mad or must remember
How we found thee in the snow,
Bade thee mount, and how thou told'st me,
Well my father thou didst know.
[*The LITTLE MASTER hesitates, and shuffles towards the door.*]

LITTLE MASTER.

True, my good young lord and hero,
What ye say is right, and all things
True and right ye please to say.
Let me crave for your permission
Quickly hence to go my way.

BIORN [*laughing boisterously*].

Ha ! ha ! ha ! a sight amazing,
All his tricks and gibes forgotten,
Little Master, mastered quite
By the boy, and cringing, whining,
Slinks like whipped hound out of sight.
[*The LITTLE MASTER turns suddenly
on BIORN, and speaks with dreadful
menace.*]

LITTLE MASTER.

Stay thy folly and thy laughter,
For with thee, as well thou knowest,
Holds another reckoning.
Listen while I strike the lute-strings,
Ponder well the words I sing.

[*He takes an old and dusty lute from
the wall, and with marvellous speed
having tuned it, sings in harsh tone.*]

The flower all fragrant and bright was thine own,
But in folly away thou hast gambled thy right,
And now to a servant art changed from a
knight,
And naught for thy sin can atone.

The flower all fragrant and bright was thine own,
Why held'st thou not fast to thy treasure and
right?

Thou servant of sin, and no longer a knight.

Now dwell'st thou in anguish alone,

[Louder.] And for ever in anguish shalt dwell,
[Still louder.] For thy name it is written
in hell.

[*The strings of the lute break, and a cloud
of dust covering instrument and player,
the room appears as in a mist. BIORN
sinks back in a swoon.*]

[Aside.] Thou, too, shalt be mine for ever,
Who, with innocence of boyhood,
Now dost drive me hence away ;
Sweetest fruits of knowledge plucking,
Bitter penalty shalt pay. [Exit.]

SINTRAM.

O my father ! what doth ail thee ?
That thou sinkest helpless backward,
Gasping for thy very breath,
Giving forth no word in answer,
Pale like one that's nigh to death.

BIORN [*faintly*].

'Twas not Death—that here was sitting—

'Tis not yet—his time to conquer—

But another—often here—

[*Speech fails him.*]

SINTRAM [*shouting*].

Rolf, bring help, and hasten hither.

[*To BIORN.*] Speak, what fails thee, father
dear?

[*ROLF and attendants hasten in, and
BIORN is borne away senseless.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*Wooded height overlooking a bay.*
ROLF seated alone among the trees.

ROLF [*singing*].

How joyously in this bright noon of spring
The sparkling waves come dancing to the
land,
And then at last upon the golden sand
Their little load of waters gently fling ;
And sweetest notes as if in answer ring
From out the wooded cliffs on either hand,
Where from the topmost boughs I hear the
band
Of many-plumaged songsters softly sing,
And o'er my head, where spreading branches
meet,
The pale green leaves embroider heaven's
blue ;

The mossy carpet spread beneath my feet
Is decked with fragrant flowers of fairest
hue,
That scarce have scattered yet the morning
dew,
And fill the southern breeze with perfume sweet.
[To himself.] Alas ! my voice in song to
raise,
As if among the birds I dwelt,
Is idle work, and here to gaze
On Nature's beauty, while around
Men will not cease their evil ways.
They pluck the fair first opening bud,
And cast it reckless to the ground ;
They wait till quite the water's flood
Hath ebb'd to make the firm sea sand
All stained and red with human blood.
And this fair noonday's radiant light
My lord doth use with reckless troop
To seek his foeman, and this height
I mounted helplessly to watch
The issue of the wanton fight.
O Sintram, couldst thou know how dear
Thou art to me, and how I sink,

O'ercome by sadness and by fear,
When with thy father terrible
Thou scatt'rest slaughter far and near.
Ah, this fair spring with beauty fraught,
It is the sixth since Biorn rose
From that great sickness which I thought
Had been his last, by poisoned breath
Of pilgrim false most surely brought.
And Sintram from a boy hath grown
A man past all control, who ne'er
Will warning heed or master own ;
And ne'er in fray most desperate
To waver or to yield is known.
His home is lawless cruelty's seat,
And yet he knoweth gentleness,
His voice can sound so sad and sweet ;
No maiden hath he ever wronged,
No weakness trampled 'neath his feet,
And children's hearts he hath the grace
To win and take their fears away ;
The old and sick they love his face,
And 'neath those haggard features seem
His mother's lineaments to trace.
And tho' beneath the arches fair

Of God's own house he kneels not oft,
At least his lips will move in prayer
When sounds the bell for Angelus
In sweet waves thro' the evening air.

[*Starts up and looks out seaward.*]

But see, with flags and banners gay,
A mighty ship of Norman build
Comes ever nearer to the bay ;
And all the decks are filled with men
And arms that catch the noontide ray.

[*Enter SINTRAM with armed men on the right, and meets troopers entering from the left.*]

TROOPER.

Welcome news, I bring you, Master,
For no more our foes lie hidden ;
Dare to seek us face to face ;
- See their ship upon the waters
Beareth toward the bay apace.

SINTRAM.

Unprepared they thought to find us,
Scattered in the woods to strike us,
Wiser counsel they should take.

Till they land, lie hid in ambush,
Then resistless onset make.

ROLF.

Stay your hand, lest haply smiting
Friends, not enemies.

SINTRAM.

Be silent ;

Strike we will, whate'er the foe.

He who dares to touch our coastland,
Sintram's sword shall surely know.

[*They pass forward. ROLF slowly follows, and exit.*]

SCENE II.—*A sandy bay on the coast. In front FOLKO with dagger uplifted kneels on SINTRAM. Norman warriors around. Behind, on raised deck of a ship, GABRIELLE and her maidens.*

FOLKO.

Die, thou blood-stained pirate chieftain,
lest again in treacherous ambush
Thou mayst lurk to spoil and slay.

SINTRAM.

Strike, strange foeman ; thou hast conquered.

GABRIELLE [*from the ship*].

Knight, thine hand in mercy stay.

[FOLKO *springs up.*]

Spare the helpless foe and fallen ;

Mercy is the noblest conquest.

FOLKO [*to SINTRAM*].

Life and freedom take, and know

Both to gentle voice beseeching

Of my Gabrielle dost owe.

[*Raises SINTRAM, who sinks weeping
on his knees.*]

Can it be ? The brooch he weareth

Bear's claws wrought in gold all curious,

And upon his helmet, see

Golden claws proclaim my foeman

Brave knight Biorn's son to be.

We are kinsmen ! I had ever

Thought of our great house all scions

Deeds ignoble ever scorned,

Would not strike with wanton weapons
 Friendly strangers all unwarned.

SINTRAM.

Well I know your name and greatness.
 Slay me, tho' I am not worthy
 Death to ask from noble hand ;
 Let the light no more behold me,
 Slay me here upon the strand.

FOLKO.

Is't because thou hast been vanquished
 Death thou wishest ? Or is't rather
 Shame for an unknightly deed ?
 [SINTRAM bows his head.]
 Then, brave youth, for reparation
 Thou the more thy life dost need.
 Youth thou art, and yet I tell thee
 Hadst thou shown such dauntless valour
 In a noble cause and just,
 Knight this day I would have made thee,
 Worthy of the glorious trust ;
 Gabrielle had joyous fastened

On thy breast a scarf of azure,
Placed within thine hands a sword.
Yet take comfort ; not for ever
Lost and gone is thy reward.

[*GABRIELLE descends from the ship,
and amid music approaches and
takes SINTRAM by the hand.*]

GABRIELLE.

Kinsman of my lord, I greet thee,
Son of mighty Biorn, greeting.
Norman fields and orchards gay
Know thy father's fame, and smiling
Gascon vineyards far away.
Be not downcast that Sir Folko,
Dreaded by the Moorish crescent,
Hath been first to-day, for he,
Victor ever in all strivings,
Yields his arms to none but me.
Lead me to thy father's castle ;
Folko here hath come to show me
All the wonders of the North,
And the old homes whence his fathers
Sailed on wild adventures forth.

SCENE III.—BIORN'S Castle. BIORN, SINTRAM, FOLKO, GABRIELLE, seated in the great hall. Evening.

GABRIELLE.

So my lute hath nothing suffered
By the journey o'er the water.

FOLKO.

Let us have the proof and hear
How the gentle sounds re-echo
Thro' the arches soft and clear,

[GABRIELLE plays awhile on her lute.]

SINTRAM.

Sweet these sounds all unfamiliar
In our gloomy halls, and sweeter
Still would sound your voice in song;
And the birds the boughs forsaking
Round the casements all would throng.

GABRIELLE [singing].

The sunny days of May have come again,
Again the earth is painted bright with flowers,
Again from out a hundred leafy bowers

The birds pour forth their fresh melodious strain.

All joys return but one. Ah ! one in vain
I call and call again thro' the sad hours,
And fruitless longing all my heart devours,
And love and joy within my breast lie slain.
Cease, nightingale, thy softly rippling voice ;
Cease, lark, thy merry carols in the skies ;
O glisten not so brightly flowers of May :
The loving tones that made me once rejoice
I hear no more, no more those gentle eyes
I see ; for my sweet love hath sped away.

[*To SINTRAM.*] Wherefore dost thou sigh
so deeply ?
Seem so strangely touched and shaken
By so plain and slight a lay,
Such as in our land in spring-time
Many may'st thou hear each day.

SINTRAM.

Then your land must be enchanted,
Garden echoing songs celestial,
Jasper-walled and golden-gated,

Bright with never-fading blossoms,
 Each with fragrant dewdrop weighted.
 [He kneels at GABRIELLE'S feet.]
 From this garden fair descending
 Gentleness ye spread and gladness
 O'er the rude disordered world,
 Bringing peace where till your coming,
 Swords were drawn and spears were hurled.

GABRIELLE [drawing near FOLKO].
 Half affrighted, dearest Folko,
 Maketh me this strange youth's wildness ;
 Half compassionate I feel,
 Seeing his loneliness and round him
 Hearts of stone and brows of steel.
 But with thee beside me fielth
 All my fear and pity restest.
 [To SINTRAM.] Sintram, hither come and take
 This my lute, for thou art skilful
 Sweetest melody to make.

SINTRAM.

Nay, fair lady of Montfauçon,
 These rough hands the strings would sever,
 Iron harp is best for me,

Chords of mighty she-bear's sinews :

Listen to my melody.

[*He takes his harp and sings ever louder and more wildly, BIORN joining in the chorus. GABRIELLE clings in terror to FOLKO.*]

[*Sings.*] "O whither away while the waves beat
and roar?"

"I am hoisting my sail for the southern shore."

(*Chorus.*) Sing ho ! for the land of the beautiful
flowers.

"I have trodden enough the ice and the snow,
To dance 'mid the vines and the myrtles I go."

Sing ho ! &c.

And he sailed by moonlight and sailed by day,
Till he cast his anchor in Naples bay.

Sing ho ! &c.

There stood by the sea a maiden so fair,
A golden fillet encircled her hair.

Sing ho ! &c.

"God greet thee, fair maiden, and make no
delay ;

A bride must thou be to me even this day."

Sing ho ! &c.

"O stranger, I may not take thy hand,

This day I'm betrothed to the lord of the land."

Sing ho ! &c.

**"Bid him hither his valour to try with the sword,
And thou be the prize and the victor's reward."**

Sing ho ! &c.

**Then up came in anger the lord of the land,
And the Norseman struck him down dead on
the strand.**

Sing ho ! &c.

**And the victor leapt up in his gladness and cried,
"Now mine are his castles, his lands, and his
bride."**

Sing ho ! for the land of the beautiful flowers.

FOLKO.

Songs like these I love to hear them,

Songs of battle and of daring.

Give me warriors true and bold,

And the iron of their valour

Faith shall turn to purest gold.

Let us sail for Sion's city,

She the maiden now in thraldom,

Palestine our land of flowers,

Strike to earth the Moorish crescent !

Let Jerusalem be ours.

SCENE IV.—*The Castle Garden. Summer evening.* SINTRAM hastily trampling thro' the bushes is nigh to stumble over the LITTLE MASTER. In the distance GABRIELLE seated in an arbour.

LITTLE MASTER.

Whither doth your hot blood bear you,
Knightly youth, so fast and wildly ?

SINTRAM.

Me thou asketh? answer rather,
Why thou crawlst here unbidden
In the garden of my father?

LITTLE MASTER.

Perhaps your father might give answer,
But at least your Highness mighty
My poor craft will not forbid;
Snails I catch; of these 'tis certain
Ye would like your garden rid.
Yet they make a broth the richest,

And themselves are worth regarding,
 Faces wondrous wise have got,
 Fattened bodies, horns extended ;
 [Fumbling at a pocket.] See some samples of
 my lot.

SINTRAM.

Pfui ! Disgusting are these creatures ;
 Cease thy jesting ; tell me plainly
 What thy calling, what thy name ?

LITTLE MASTER.

Many names I'm called most different,
 Yet the substance is the same.
 Grasp at substance, not at shadows ;
 Call me, if a name is needed,
 Little Master, for I teach,
 Those at least who do not fear me,
 Sweet and hidden things to reach.

SINTRAM.

Stupid dwarf ! That I should fear thee !

LITTLE MASTER.

Finer men than you have often——

SINTRAM.

Fool ! Thou may'st my courage try ;
Here I'll listen till the daylight
Fades, and darkness veils the sky.

LITTLE MASTER.

Listen then, Lord Sintram valiant,
Yet I first would give you counsel,
That ye make your eyes to wander
Where beneath a bower of roses
Gabrielle reclineth yonder.

[SINTRAM *perceives GABRIELLE, and
deeply blushes.*]

Nay, to blush there's no occasion ;
No reproach to love her beauty,
Your sweet goddess to adore.
Listen to a pretty story,
Told in Greece in days of yore.
Fairest of the fair was Helen,
Gabrielle her name for Norsemen,
Wedded to the Spartan king :
Came a gallant youth, Sir Paris,
Hearing all her praises sing.
Sintram we might name him, only

More he had of wit and courage,
Let not slip the favouring day,
Wooed and won the heart of Helen,
Took her in his ship away.
Ten long years of bliss unspoken,
Helen's sweet love was his portion,
Safe within the walls of Troy ;
Only when those walls had fallen
Came an end of life and joy.
Thrice ten years the Moonrock fortress
Hold ye could, all foes notwithstanding,
Sweetest Helen at your side ;
See the postern door most strangely
Stands unbarred and open wide.
*[A door in the high garden wall appears
open, and in the far distance the
Moonrock Castle lit by the rays of
the setting sun.]*
Let not pass this hour of fortune,
Waste not all your youth in sorrow,
Age will strike us ere we think ;
Seize the cup of love entrancing,
Place it to your lips and drink.
Live the life your youth befitting,

From the waving fields of pleasure
Golden harvests daily reaping ;
Virtue's not for present using,
Needs, like wine, long years of keeping.
Nay, but virtue, I would ask you,
What it is if not the using
Of all powers Nature gives ?
He that, bravely striving, gathers
Love and beauty truly lives.
Listen not to envy's carping ;
They with dull and feeble senses,
They who fear to strike and win,
What their weakness cannot master,
This they say is vice and sin.
And the old and tedious preachers
Bid us practise self-denial,
Hide from us their deeds in youth,
And, themselves unfit for pleasure,
Fasts and vigils preach as truth.
But the Truth is one, they tell us,
Both with Beauty and with Goodness.
Grasp the truth then quickly ; see,
Helen beauty is and goodness,
Take her and possess all three.

And if childish spectre haunt you
Of a Providence above us
All our actions watching o'er :
Look, this Providence so watchful,
Open leaves the postern door.
Be a man, and know your hour ;
Bear away the priceless treasure ;
All your troubles gone and past,
Years of sweetest love await you ;
Quick ! the sun is setting fast.

[*SINTRAM rushes towards GABRIELLE, when the Angelus bell is heard. He stops and makes the sign of the cross. The LITTLE MASTER flies through the postern door and slams it violently, the wind howling strangely. Then SINTRAM slowly approaches GABRIELLE.]*

SINTRAM

Gentle lady, be not fearful ;
To the castle let me lead you
While the daylight slowly dies.

In our Northern mountains often

Sudden gusts of wind arise.

[*Exeunt towards the castle.*]

SCENE V.—BIORN'S Castle. *The great hall.*

BIORN, SINTRAM, GABRIELLE, FOLKO, and
attendants. Enter a HERALD.

HERALD.

Eric, mighty Earl of Hamar,
Sendeth to Sir Biorn greeting,
Claimeth oxen, iron, gold,
Full amends to make for injury,
Cause whereof shall now be told.
Sailing in the Grecian waters,
Chios Isle he would have taken,
Where, some thirty years before,
Soldiers of the Eastern Cæsar
Slew his father on the shore ;
But for Arinborn, your kinsman,
Sea-king called, who, coming swiftly,
Swore a mighty oath and strong :
Eric ne'er should waste and ravage
Sacred isle of wine and song.

Then they fought upon the waters,
 Fought till nigh the day had darkened,
 When of Eric's vessels three,
 Founedered two, and need o'ertook him
 From the sea-king's wrath to flee.
 Sunward come, of you he asketh,
 Nearest kinsman of the sea-king,
 Payment of due recompense ;
 Else on Nihung's heath to meet him
 Armed for battle eight days hence.

BIORN.

Else on Nihung's heath we meet him
 Eight days hence all armed for battle.

[Handing him a golden cup.]

Take this cup of Chian wine ;
 Drink the draught, and in thy mantle
 Bear away the cup as thine.

FOLKO.

What the mighty Earl thy master
 Mean ye Folko of Montfaucon ;
 My adail see me 'mid the rest,

As the sea-king's ancient comrade
And Sir Biorn's kin and guest.

[*Exit HERALD.*]

GABRIELLE [*smiling to FOLKO.*].

So thou leavest me all lonely,
Rushing ever into warfare.

BIORN.

If, fair lady, you would deign
Here to stay, my son, as warden,
In the castle shall remain.

SINTRAM [*aside, dreamily.*].

So, perchance, it thus did happen
E'en as now that Menelaus
Ventured forth to wage some war,
When knight Paris found his Helen,
And away the sweet prize bore.

[GABRIELLE *starts suddenly and clings to FOLKO.*]

GABRIELLE.

Not without thee, not without thee
Will I stay ; and the achievements

In the battle I would set;
 Nor would suffice, were thou wounded,
 Other hands to wait on thee.

FOLKO.

Then, like bright and steadfast beacon,
 That doth light the shipmates striving
 With the hungry waves for life,
 Gabriele shall light our warfare,
 Be the judge of all our strife.

SCENE VI.—*Njord's Heath after the battle.*

On a raised platform sits GABRIELLE with her ladies. Enter FOLKO leading SISTRAM by the hand, followed by TEUTON. Norman and Norwegian soldiers.

FOLKO.

Gabriele, most gracious lady,
 Queen of this our glorious battle,
 Let me lead before thy throne
 One to whose undaunted valour
 Victory we owe alone.
 Bjorn here shall be my witness,

He himself in vain the onset
On the left had stood unshaken ;
All in vain my Norman horsemen
Eric on the right had taken.
For a warrior with strange armour
In the centre seemed to gather
Swordsmen, spearmen all together ;
Death before him spread and terror,
Spread like fire 'mid the heather.
All was lost ; my Norman horsemen
Round their prisoner did waver,
Biorn's guard stood stiff with fear ;
To the strange knight rushing onward
Warrior none would venture near.
But alone amid the terror
Stood a youth unmoved, unshaken,
Knit his brows in dreadful frown,
Then with battle-axe sprang forward,
Struck the wondrous stranger down.
As their champion fell, the terror
In its turn our foes o'erpowered,
Courage to our ranks returned ;
Back they came, the youth their leader,
And with shame their faces burned.

Shame and fury urged them forward,
 Quickly was the strife decided ;
 Melted Eric's host away :
 This the youth whose heart all fearless
 Won the victory to-day.

[*Shouts of applause from the soldiers.*]

GABRIELLE.

Welcome ; yet I would the victor
 Were in chivalry's fair order
 Bid to mount a loftier height ;
 Squire let him be no longer,
 Let him kneel and rise a knight.

[*Renewed shouts. SINTRAM kneels at a sign from FOLKO, who speaks to him with solemnity*]

FOLKO.

O thou who would'st be gloriously upraised,
 And the new dignity of knight receive,
 Take heed that by thee rightly be appraised
 The solemn pledge all evil ways to leave,
 All sin to fly and all discourteous deeds ;
 The Holy Church with last breath to defend -

The widow and the orphan in their needs,
And all poor toilers ever to befriend ;
Not grasping at another's wealth or power ;
Not swelled with pride tho' first in noble
strife ;
Loyal, just, and humble to thy dying hour :
This is true chivalry, this must be thy life.

[*Solemnly dubs him knight, and then
again presents him to GABRIELLE.*]

GABRIELLE.

Knight Sir Sintram, the award
Gives to thee the battle's prize.
In thine hand I place this sword :
Be a faithful knight and wise,
Liegeman of the Heavenly Lord.
Knight Sir Sintram, on thy breast
While this azure scarf I tie,
On thine heart be deep impressed
Gentleness and purity,
This is Gabrielle's behest.
[*She gives him her hands to kiss. Then
BIORN leads ERIC forward.*]

BIORN.

Ere ye leave your seat of judgment,
 Noble lady, let your welcome
 Greet the brave foe of this morn ;
 Now all feuds for ever buried,
 Peace perpetual we have sworn.

ERIC.

Gracious lady, when a chieftain
 Both by sea and land is beaten,
 Time it is to sue for peace ;
 Yet no craven flight hath witnessèd
 Niflung's heath or isles of Greece.

GABRIELLE.

Brave heart best 'mid loss is proven ;
 Noble Eric, let me greet you.

FOLKO.

Witness all my Normans give ;
 'Adversary worthy art thou,
 Better linked in peace to live.'

BIORN.

Could'st thou tell us who so bravely
Led thy foot till Sintram's weapon
Laid him dead upon the ground?
Rolf hath gone to give him burial
Yonder on the oak-clad mound.

ERIC.

More than I can tell thou askest :
We were forging arms and armour
Three nights since 'mid talk and song,
Came the blast of sudden trumpet,
And repeated loud and long.
Up I sprang, I knew not wherefore,
All the others stayed and shivered,
And the dogs I called in vain,
E'en the fiercest crouched and cowered,
Whined and writhed as if in pain.
Torch in one hand, sword in other,
Strode I to the outer tower,
Open made the wicket door,
Met a knight of smallest stature,
Strange accoutrements he wore,

"Oh, how much ado thou makest
O'er one small man asking shelter."
Scarlet grew my face with shame ;
Bade him enter, join my warriors ;
Half reluctant in he came.
Never ways of guest were stranger,
Sometimes merry, sometimes bitter,
Sometimes shrinking as with fear.
Never horse nor hound nor falcon
But would flee when he came near.
He had been in every country,
With the Saracens and Grecians
Seemed familiar, and his name
Twice or thrice he told us, strangely
Never sounded quite the same.
And that name none could remember
Nor describe his features clearly ;
And of stature tho' so small,
In essays of strength and cunning
First he was among us all.
Armourer of all most skilful
Soon he showed himself in forging
Weapons none had seen before ;
Frightful, deadly, till I told him,

Such I ne'er would use in war.
But his leadership and counsels
These to use were not forbidden :
And a triumph he foretold :
Strange he fell, tho' hath young Sintram.
Hand so strong and heart so bold.
[Enter ROLF and attendants *pallid with fear.*]

ROLF.

Pardon that we venture hither
Unfulfilled your will to bury
Worthily the stranger knight ;
As we loosed his vizor gently,
Back we started at the sight ;
Livid face we saw distorted
With a grin of fiendish malice,
And a dreadful stench arose
Like from charnel-house o'erpowering,
And our blood within us froze.

[After a pause.]

So we left the corpse unburied,
And have hastened hither, fearing
E'en one backward glance to throw.

That I thought had grown so mild ?
Wherefore wildly strike the branches ?
Speak, O speak, my foster child !

SINTRAM.

Speak I will, and bid thee hasten,
Rolf, and leave me, for thy dwellings
Are not mine ; that garden fair,
Where a thousand angel voices
Murmur sweet in summer air.
And if haply once the portals
Opened and I gazed enraptured,
Blast from out the icy North
Quickly closed them fast and bid me
Wander in the darkness forth.

ROLF.

Sinram, hear me, knight and master.
Hold ye not e'en now the glittering
Sword that her sweet hand hath pressed ?
Waves not yet reward of valour,
Azure scarf upon your breast ?
See the sword and scarf betokening

Noble deeds and life ennobled,
Nor your happy words unsay,
Earthly joy ye wished no greater.

SINTRAM.

Ah ! so was it on that day.

[*He bows his head and weeps. The sun has set and it grows dark. SINTRAM starts up and speaks in ever louder tones.]*

Now the day is past and over ;
Gabrielle awhile illumined
All my life ; the sun was high :
Sunk hath now my sun for ever,
Darkness creepeth o'er my sky.
Woods and hills are veiled with darkness,
And the fiends are loose, and vainly
Strives the moon to cast a ray.
Ha ! the clouds her face have covered,
Into night and hell away !

[*He rushes out wildly. ROLF kneels and prays.]*

SCENE II.—*Inside a Fisherman's cottage. The Fisherman, his Wife, his son OTTO, and other Children. Violent storm without.*

FISHERMAN.

All the years that I have laboured
Day and night upon these coastlands,
Stranger storm has never been.
On the waters shone the moonlight,
In the sky no cloud was seen,
As beside our boat we rested,
Shadowed by the rocks o'erhanging,
Looking at the distant beach,
There we saw two wondrous figures,
White wands in the hands of each.
One was tall, and in the moonlight
Beardless face I saw, and raven
Locks disordered, but in vain
Sought I to descry the other,
Often tho' I looked again.
Only this I saw, that sometimes
To a dwarf the figure dwindled,
Sometimes seemed an inky cloud,

Batlike wings at times appearing,
Garments like a dead man's shroud.
Both their wands were waving strangely,
Then upon the sand drew circles,
Till the youth to falter seemed,
Stood uncertain ; then all sudden
In his hands a dagger gleamed,
And a lock he severed quickly
From his hair, as one in frenzy,
And the other, who stood by,
Snatched the lock with eager gestures,
Then sent forth a hellish cry.
But his words they could not reach me,
For the storm, that rose so sudden,
Filled the air with deafening roar,
Lightning flashed thro' mist and darkness,
Waves like mountains struck the shore.
Scarce from the o'erwhelming waters
Could we drag our boat to shelter,
Scarce ourselves could hasten hither
'Mid unearthly moanings, making
Blood to freeze and strength to wither.
And a tall and pallid spectre
Forward rushed amid the waters,

Clad in garment hung with bones,
And I heard the waters echo
With the sound of dying groans.

FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

Even we within the cottage
All were startled by the whirlwind,
Which no storm-clouds did betoken,
And poor Ruric's troubled slumbers
By the whistling wind were broken.

OTTO.

Father, yet thou hast not told them ;
Clear I saw him in the moonlight,
'Twas Sir Sintram who was there ;
He who drew the gleaming dagger,
Cut the lock from off his hair.
And his comrade looked so fiendlike,
That perchance 'tis truly whispered
Sintram's heart is but a stone,
And he's given to the devil,
Who will claim him for his own.

FISHERMAN.

Silence, Otto ! Never utter
Evil tales or idly listen
To their telling ; and this night
Thou art foolish if thou thinkest
We could see or hear aright.
Wicked spirits, all deceiving,
Human forms can take, contriving
Deeds of darkness and of shame ;
Now against our young lord plotting,
Seek to sully his fair name.

FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

Son, an evil word thou spakest,
Sintram's goodness all forgotten.
None than he hath softer heart,
Of our pain and sorrow seeking
On himself to take a part.
Oft he's come and sat for hours
By thy brother, and sweet stories
Told him and beguiled his pain.

OTTO.

God forgive me ! Never evil
Will I think or speak again.

FISHERMAN.

Ah ! Sir Sintram, as I love him,
Lowlier lot by far I'd wish him :
Riches, power, bloom of youth,
All too often draw men downwards,
Blind them to the simplest truth ;
Truths our children learn, and shining
'Mid our poverty and toiling
Clear as day, are oft obscured
'Mid their tangled lives and learning,
Ne'er in rest, of naught assured.
Sintram then, with tempters round him,
None to guide him in the darkness,
Stands in sorest need of prayer ;
Let us kneeling here intrust him
To the Virgin Mother's care.
[*They all kneel and pray before a small shrine.*]

SCENE III.—BIORN'S *Castle*. GABRIELLE'S
chamber. FOLKO and GABRIELLE at
the window. *Storm without.*

GABRIELLE.

Folko, tell me, shall we never
See the bright sun in the heavens?
Will the wind for evermore
Moaning make, and raging waters
Keep us storm-bound to this shore?
Why so sudden hath the autumn,
That was gentle, golden, radiant,
Veiled in black her colours gay
Since three days ago, when Sintram
Rode at nightfall hence away?

FOLKO.

Strange it is, and all the stranger
That no sign appeared of tempest
On that evening sweet and calm,
Then all suddenly resounded
Storm-bells ringing in alarm.
Yet perchance with change as sudden

As the angry driving torrents
 Came upon us will they cease,
 And before the iron winter
 There will come a time of peace
 [Enter SINTRAM, his face deadly pale,
 his hair in wild disorder, and one
 long lock wanting.]

GABRIELLE.

God preserve us ! God have mercy !
 In the storm hath Sintram perished ;
 See his pallid spectre here.
 Yet with thee beside me, Folko,
 Even now I will not fear.

FOLKO.

Gentle Gabrielle, take courage.
 'Tis no spectre here before us,
 'Tis Sir Sintram, the young knight ;
 Ah ! but in these evil hours
 Fallen into evil plight.
 [Leads SINTRAM to a shield-mirror.]
 Look upon this burnished metal,
 See thy features deadly pallid,

See thy hair in disarray ;
Answer, by what strange adventure
One long lock is cut away ?
[SINTRAM is silent. FOLKO leads him
to the window.]
Look without and give me answer,
Whence doth come this raging tempest ?
Art thou dumb ?

GABRIELLE.

A dreadful fear
Comes upon me we are prisoners,
Bound by spells of witchcraft here.

FOLKO.

Many secret arts of darkness
Linger in these northern mountains,
Whence e'er yet are scarcely fled
Thor and Odin, Frea, Loki,
Demons worshipped, or the dead.
Yet, sweet Gabrielle, be fearless ;
Christ hath won for us our freedom.
[To SINTRAM.] But to thee I say : Beware !

Know'st the proverb : Woe betide him
 Satan seizeth by the hair?

[*SINTRAM cries out as if struck, and falls moaning at FOLKO's feet.*]

SINTRAM.

Snatch my scarf from off my bosom,
 Pluck my sword from out the scabbard,
 Slay me here and end my shame ;
 For of knight I am not worthy,
 Nor of man to bear the name.

FOLKO.

Neither scarf from off thy bosom
 Will I snatch, nor from the scabbard
 Pluck thy sword, nor judge another.
 Is not he awhile that standeth
 E'en to him that falleth brother ?
 Hasten, seek the healing balsam
 Given by celestial mercy,
 Given for the wounded heart.
 Grace thou hast, and life and power
 Yet to choose the better part.
 [*He gently raises him. Exit SINTRAM weeping.*]

Sweet love, fear not. Now it seemeth
Hath the storm wind lulled a little ;
Listen ! In the corridor
Good old Rolf is softly singing
Words that ne'er I heard before.

ROLF [*sings without*].

Balder, the beauteous god of light, in vain
His dark oncoming destiny would fly,
And reach the blest Valhalla o'er the sky,
Like those the bright Valkyrias from the
slain
Choose out, and, lifting from the reddened
plain,
Bear in their mighty arms to joys on high :
For he was doomed ingloriously to die,
And sink to Nifheim, ne'er to rise again.
" 'Tis but an idle legend," wilt thou say ?
Nay, rather doth not hidden sense appear,
Lest we grow wanton in our little day
Of strength and skill, and excellent array
Of art and science, and forget to fear
The day of sorrow and of death so near ?

GABRIELLE.

Oh, my knight, my one protector !
Back in crowds return my terrors,
Shapes of horror darkly loom,
Coming onward mortal dangers,
Dread inevitable doom.

FOLKO.

Gentle Gabrielle, sweet lady,
Suffer not that seeming omens
All thy strength with fear benumb ;
Christ hath made the arch-foe silent,
And the oracles are dumb.
Dreams and omens, dread forebodings,
Dismal fears of ills impending,
Men the envious demon's sport,
Snared, entrapped, and helpless victims
Unto utter ruin brought :
These most fell imaginations,
Heavy yoke of superstition,
Burdens of the slaves of night,
From us far, oh ! let us cast them,
We the children of the light.

Rolf hath right well sung and wisely ;
Ever we are travelling forward,
 Ever death and sorrows nearing ;
Sometimes they may cast their shadows
 Forward on us ere appearing.
But, my sweet love, heart the dearest,
Whether sorrows come all sudden,
 Or foreseen from long before ;
Whether singly or in numbers,
 Pressing on us more and more :
Secret joy within ne'er fails us,
Trustful love doth e'er sustain us,
 Sweetly soothes the sharpest pain.
Hark ! the aged minstrel's music
 Through the arches sounds again.

ROLF [*sings*].

The vast unnumbered lamps in heaven's hall
 Amaze us, and their orbits, wisely planned ;
 Yet God doth hold them all within His hand ;
And nowhere falleth speck of dust so small
The All-Seeing doth not see, and will its fall ;
 Who counteth every grain of yellow sand,

Each wave that e'er hath dashed against the
land ;
What hath been, will be, might be, knoweth all.
Oh, wherefore then should care oppress us still,
And dread forebodings ? For except God's
wrath,
Naught else have we to fear, nor any ill ;
This one wise fear doth cast all others forth ;
Naught is, but He permits it, or must cease
To be ; and in His will is all our peace.

SCENE IV.—*Snowy summit. Precipices on all sides. FOLKO stands in hunting dress and snow-shates.*

FOLKO.

Almost glad the bear-hunt makes me
That the wild portentous autumn
Hindered us from setting forth,
Kept me for this winter season,
For brave pastimes of the North.

[Enter SINTRAM.]

Welcome, comrade ! By good fortune
On this mound, his last entrenchment,
Crouching on the topmost snow,

Hear the bear I found and slew him,
But in dying he fell below.
Quickly I would downward follow,
Head and claws to take as trophies,
Victory's crown for Gabrielle ;
Only tell me, will this snow-skate
Still hold fast and bear me well ?

SINTRAM.

Nay, Sir Folko, let me swiftly
Sliding down bring back thy trophies.

FOLKO.

Of true knight it is not told,
That he leaves his work unfinished :
Answer, will this foot-gear hold ?

[SINTRAM stoops down and examines
FOLKO's snow-skate. Enter unseen
the LITTLE MASTER.]

LITTLE MASTER.

Aye, of course, 'tis right as can be.

[FOLKO skates instantly down the slope
and disappears. Presently a cry is
heard of one falling.]

Right enough, and rightly broken
Is the hero's neck ; so now
Hasten back to happy Helen,
Freed at last from marriage vow.
She is longing for your coming,
Well ye know she loves you dearly,
Only Menelaus stood
Right across her path and hindered
Love from hastening where it would.

FOLKO [*from below*].

Comrade, help me ; I am wounded,
Yet may live.

SINTRAM.

I come, I hear thee.

LITTLE MASTER.

Stay, he's quite past help, I know ;
Gabrielle is waiting for you,
Gabrielle is all aglow.
See her cheeks like fairest roses
All for you, and hands of ivory
Beckoning your quick return ;

Keep no more two loves asunder,
Flames that none can quench must burn.
[He whispers in SINTRAM'S ear, and
both hasten away, while FOLKO'S
voice is heard.]

FOLKO.

Sintram, knight ! Oh, come to help me,
Thou who bearest sword of honour,
Scarf of noble deeds the token ;
With her young the she-bear creepeth
Near me, and mine arm is broken.

SCENE V.—*Path down the mountain.* SINTRAM and the LITTLE MASTER are hurrying past.

LITTLE MASTER.

Mistress she-bear, masters young bears,
Ha ! a dainty meal ye're making ;
Him ye rend and him devour
Who was Islam's scourge and terror ;
Fill yourselves this merry hour.
Ha ! my fine most Christian hero,

All is ended, and from henceforth
Need no Moorish maidens sigh ;
Never wilt thou more in battle
" Mountjoy and Saint Denis" cry——

Ah ! Ah !

[*Writhing in pain and terror, the
LITTLE MASTER creeps away and
disappears. SINTRAM stops asto-
nished. After a long pause exclaims*]

SINTRAM.

Am I waking ? am I dreaming ?
He whose words had led me captive,
Kindled in me passion's flame,
Flees in terror that he uttered
Holy war-cry, saintly name !
This foul coward ne'er my master
More ! But ah ! there grasp me throttling,
So that scarce I draw my breath,
Dread, remorse, despair, and horror ;
For 'tis mine the deed of death.
Cliffs of ice, why stand ye steadfast ?
Close upon me, crush me quickly,
Let the earth asunder burst,

And a yawning gulf devour
Traitor evermore accursed.

[*A bell for prayer sounds from a distant hermitage.*]

Ah ! that sound, to prayer the summons.
Long ago—O mother ! mother !
Dost thou hear me ?—whilst my head
On thy lap I laid, didst bid me
Love and trust—but thou art dead.

[*Weeps bitterly awhile, then starts up.*]
Dead no more, but ever watching,
And our God this hour imploring
Pardon e'en to me to give ;
And a voice doth seem to whisper,
Noble Folko yet doth live.

[*Hastens backward.*]

SCENE VI.—*Gorge in the mountains. Folko sitting pale and bleeding, one arm broken. Sintram draws near.*

FOLKO.

Through the she-bear passed thy weapon ;
Of her mate, I pray thee, fetch me

Head and claws, that I may show
These to Gabrielle, my promised
Trophies from the pathless snow.

[*Exit SINTRAM, and presently returns
with the claws and head of the
be-bear.*]

Thanks I render for thy service.
See these wounds, they still are bleeding ;
Staunch them, and my broken arm
Set in rough-made splints, and homeward
Then canst lead me without harm.

[*SINTRAM binds up his wounds and his
broken arm.*]

SINTRAM.

Oh, may God on me have mercy !
Scarce I dare one word to utter,
Or to look you in the face ;
Not with aught that's good or noble,
But with wickedness my place.

FOLKO.

Truly on an evil highway
Hadst thou once more started forward

Purpose good all broken down ;
Yet our utmost strength is frailty,
None can win himself his crown.
And if all our tears availed not,
Naught the dreadful debt could cancel,
In what heart could hope endure ?
Lead me, Sintram ; hold me firmly,
For my steps are little sure.
Lead me homeward, my deliverer ;
Truly thou my life hast rescued.
Gabrielle shall know this day,
Had thy spear not struck the she-bear,
I had fallen as her prey.

[SINTRAM leads him away slowly.]

SCENE VII.—BIORN'S *Castle courtyard*. BIORN,
FOLKO (*his arm in a sling*), GABRIELLE
and her ladies, ROLF, *Norse and Norman*
soldiers.

NORSEMEN.

Honour to the glorious hero,
First in every kind of combat,
Even 'mid our northern snows ;
Though a dweller in the Southland,

All in our northern arts he knows,
He hath slain wild beast the mightiest,
Scaled the mountain heights the steepest,
On our snow-skates sped along
Swifter than the swiftest Norseman,
Passing all our youthful throng.
Honour to the fairest lady
That our rough land e'er hath trodden,
Worthy of her valiant knight,
Sweetest singer, sweet inspirer
Of all noble deeds and right.

FOLKO.

Warriors, well ye sound the praises
Of fair Gabrielle, my lady,
And I thank you ; but mine own
All too loud, as tho' were owing
Triumphs all to me alone.
Any skill that is my portion
In your northern sports, I learnt it
Under Ulf in Norway's land ;
And that living now ye see me,
Thanks it is to Sintram's hand.
Close had come the savage she-bear,

Almost clutched me, when all sudden
Struck her dead his well-thrown spear.
See, here cometh my deliverer ;
Greet him with a ringing cheer.

[Enter SINTRAM, whom the Normans
first, and then the Norsemen greet
with cheers. He covers his face with
his hands in shame.]

SINTRAM.

If ye knew who stood before you,
Could have seen into the hollow
Where your noble leader lay,
All your spears had pierced my body
Ere a word I more could say.
Something must I tell, not all things,
Lest my father's heart be broken ;
Know then, Normans—

FOLKO.

Silence keep ;

Ill beseemeth here to publish
Idle dreams of feverish sleep.

[A pause. Then at last SINTRAM speaks
with set features and solemn voice.]

SINTRAM.

At other times, Sir Folko, your part the word to say,
And mine to make no answer, and only to obey.
But now for once I speak, and then long silence
keep ;
The floodgates now are open, deep speaketh
unto deep.
This much to you, my comrades, and you, my
Norman guests,
'Tis right that I should tell, brave hearts in
honest breasts :
My heart is full of evil, my life is full of shame,
I am no longer worthy to bear a noble name,
Nor worthy more beneath one roof with stain-
less knight
Todwell, nor more appear in spotless lady's sight.
Farewell ! I leave you now, and to the mount of
stone,
The storm-beat Moonrock castle, I go to dwell
alone.
[*Sadly.*] My father, I must leave thee, the hour
has come at last ;

No more I must be to thee than shadow of the
past,
Nor hither come again till death doth ring a
knell—
[*Dreamily.*] The sound from far away e'en now
I hear. Farewell !

BIORN.

Do thy will, my son, unhindered,
Nothing will I set against it,
Nor thy words will seek to solve ;
For the dreadful fear doth hold me
Thou art right in thy resolve.

[*Exeunt SINTRAM and ROLF.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Outside the Moonrock Castle. Spring-time. Midnight.* SINTRAM paces to and fro by the edge of the moat.

SINTRAM.

How mild the night, the soft spring breezes blow,
The silent drops of gentle rain descend,
And every fragrant little plant doth know
That winter's iron reign hath reached its end.
Soon all the lowland fields will be aglow
With hundred flowers that harmonious blend
Their varied colours, and, as if to show
Humility, their bright heads ever bend.

Hath spring returned for me? Ah, no! not yet.
For flowers of virtue, ah! I seek in vain.
My will on evil, ah! so oft is set,
My heart with passion, ah! is torn in twain.



Oh, when will break the meshes of this net
That clings around me? When shall I a main
Begin with burning tears to pay my debt?
When shall I learn to act and to refrain?

I seek the night air, for I scarcely sleep,
But forthwith evil visions come from hell,
And the enchantress Venus bids me weep
No more, but follow the wise master well,
Who can bring Gabrielle to this strong keep,
Where for long years we may securely dwell;
And fierce desires like beasts upon me leap,
Till I am nigh my weary soul to sell.

And in a mirror, then, as bright and fair
As ever was Knight Paris, I appear,
And Gabrielle o'er me her golden hair
Lets fall, and whispers sweet words in mine
ear.
But yet within me something says : Beware!
And that enchantress standing by me near
Seems a strange likeness to the dwarf to bear
Who haunts me, and my bones are filled with
fear.

One comfort yet is left, the sword to hold
That Gabrielle bestowed and scarf of blue ;
And as a sorrowing child is soothed when told
Some wondrous tale, for me the story true
Of Niflung's heath, the strife of warriors bold,
And the strange foeman whom at last I slew,
Bring consolation, and is writ in gold
Upon my heart the joy that day I knew.

LITTLE MASTER [*from below*].

Ha ! ha ! ha !

SINTRAM.

What this sound of mocking laughter,—
Laughter half with groaning mingled ?
Muffled in strange robes doth creep
Figure small, and scarcely able
Up to mount the slope so steep.
[*The LITTLE MASTER is seen at the edge of
the moat.*] For what purpose here at night-time ?
Why thy moaning and thy laughter ?
Tell thy name and show thy face.

LITTLE MASTER.

Finely asked and finely ordered !
Manners yours a prince would grace.
In mine own turn, I might ask you
Why ye sigh and moan and wander
By the moat at midnight hour ?
Why ye look so pale and downcast
When such joy is in your power ?
But as friends we must not wrangle ;
In the moat, dark, damp, unwholesome,
'Tis but natural I did groan ;
And my laughter—the occasion,
Words of yours indeed I own.
Grand your valour in that combat
Sword and scarf reward befitting ;
Yet whom think ye then was slain ?
The dead warrior, ye remember,
How ye sought him all in vain.
E'en myself was that dead warrior,
E'en myself that scared the searchers ;
I, the wondrous valiant stranger,
Played my part for your advancement,
Triumph gave you free from danger.

Doubt ye yet?—Then gaze and see me,
[He throws off his robes and appears as a
small knight in strange armour.]
The same warrior that in fancy
On the heath ye overthrew.
Look not all so sad and downcast,
Be assured 'tis nothing new.
Nothing new, for reputation,
If ye'll only scan it closely,
Fraud and fiction will appear.
Take life as ye find it, comrade ;
Never scrutinise too near.
Never man, and still less woman,
Can endure a light too searching ;
All is bubble, froth, and spray
In this world ; the wise they gather
What they like that comes their way.
Gabrielle your way she cometh ;
Is your sweet love, deigns to give you
Silken scarf and iron sword ;
But for heart that burns and suffers
These are but a poor reward.
And to-morrow Menelaus
Sails and bears away sweet Helen ;

Paris ne'er will see her more,

[*Pauses. Then in a whisper*]

Ne'er—unless amends he maketh

For the chances missed before.

[*Pulls away some grass and brushwood by a rock, and shows in it a small iron door, that flies open at his touch.*]

Look ! a secret passage opens

Underground for forty furlongs,

Leading to the very room

Where sweet Gabrielle doth slumber,

Fresh like rose begun to bloom.

And the thorns—Duke Menelaus—

I have smoothed with magic potion ;

Deep in heavy sleep he lies :

Reach the castle in two hours,

In two more bring back your prize.

None will know her place of refuge ;

If they knew, 'twould little matter,

For this rock can ne'er be taken,

Nor with friend of mine the warden

Is there risk of being forsaken.

[*Whispers in SINTRAM'S ear.*]

SINTRAM [*dreamily*].

Art thou Venus the enchantress?

LITTLE MASTER.

Part I am, or rather Venus
Is a part of me ; and know
If ye beauteous grew as Paris,
Beauteous I should also grow.

[*ROLF appears on the ramparts above
with a lantern.*]

ROLF [*from above*].

In God's name, Sir Sintram, wherefore
Hideous ghost around you hovers
Of the warrior who was slain
By your spear on Niflung's heather,
And whose corpse was sought in vain ?

LITTLE MASTER.

What I said, up there repeateth
And confirms the pious squire.
Quickly follow through this door.

SINTRAM.

Get thee gone, thou restless tempter ;
Part in me shalt have no more.

[*The Little Master runs into the secret passage, and slams the door furiously. Enter ROLF.*]

Ah ! my Rolf, all past and over
Is my greatest consolation,
Yet my hope remaineth still.

ROLF.

Yours perchance the noblest calling,
Unconsoled to do God's will.

SCENE II.—*Convent at Drontheim. The parlour.*

SINTRAM conversing with THORA.

SINTRAM.

Fourteen winters' snows have fallen
Since we parted, dearest sister ;
Yet the day I well recall,
How we wept and clung together,
Standing in the castle hall.

Ah ! how much I longed to follow,
 Longed to mount the lofty vessel
 That was anchored in the bay,
 And my heart was nigh to bursting
 As the white sails sped away.
 And my waking on the morrow
 I remember, sad and lonely,
 Murm'ring thine and Astrid's name ;
 Then how scarce had time brought
 healing,
 When a heavier sorrow came.
 Deadly still lay dearest mother,
 Silent that sweet voice for ever,
 Closed those kindly beaming eyes,
 Cold as ice that heart so loving,
 All laid low no more to rise.

[*Weeps.*]

THORA.

Happy those who die, 'tis written,
 In the Lord, their life and gladness.
 Weep not ; for our mother's death
 Is her crown, and for her children
 Every hour lightenereth.

SINTRAM.

Ah ! my Thora, happy girlhood
Thou hast passed amid the meadows
 In the land of France the fair ;
Now the better part hast chosen,
 Wondrous life of constant prayer.
Astrid, too, as thou hast told me,
Wedded to a Norman chieftain
 Of the island in the West,
Happy bride of noble bridegroom,
 She, too, seemeth to be blest.
But for me, oh ! where the blessing ?
Where the life of joy or goodness ?
 All is darkness, sorrow, sin ;
Stony castle on the Moonrock
 Holds a stony heart within.
“Look without,” I hear thee tell me,
“Comfort take in others’ gladness.”
 Out I look upon the world ;
Men I see in wild confusion,
 Hither, thither, blindly hurled ;
Striving each his part in pleasure
 Quick to snatch before another
 Comes and bears the prize away ;

Wickedness triumphant making
 Of the innocent a prey.
And appears a sight appalling,
Men the slaves of every passion,
 Anger, envy, pride, and lust,
Like a brood of serpents struggling,
 Hissing, writhing in the dust.
Where is peace and where is order ?
Where are hearts all true and guileless ?
 Who around can see the sign
That the life of each and all men
 Is the work of hand divine ?

THORA.

Brother, to my heart the dearest,
Little skill I have to reason
 Over problems of our life ;
Little strength to give to others
 In the supernatural strife.
Yet I pray thee, brother, hear me,
Though beforehand all thou knowest
 That I tell, but for awhile
Hast forgotten, and hast listened
 To the fell seducer's guile.

On the surface thou hast rested,
Not beheld the depths of wisdom,
 Only noise and tumult heard,
Not the gentler sounds melodious,
 Not the inner silent word.
Evil soundeth, evil shouteth,
Flaunting thro' the streets and markets :
 Good doth walk in hidden ways,
And with flowers of fragrant virtues
 Earth in fairest robe arrays.
Truly dread confusion seemeth
All around to rage ; but battles
 E'er to one who doth not know
All the skilful ordered movements,
 Wild disorder seem to show.
And the great world that surrounds us,
And the small world claspt within us,
 Both are scenes of strife unending ;
Two the loves and two the cities
 Ever for men's hearts contending.
Love of self in earthly city
E'en to scorn of God upriseth ;
 But God's city that we call,
E'en to scorn of self exalteh

Love of God her all in all.
These the cities ever waging
War inexpiable, truceless,
 War with utmost ends at stake.
Brother, in this mighty combat
 Thine allotted portion take.
Wouldst thou further ask, complaining,
Wherefore any combat rages,
 Wherefore any sink and fall,
While omnipotent God ruleth,
 Maker He and Lord of all?
'Tis to ask a childish question,
'Tis to stretch our childish fingers
 Infinite expanse to clasp;
'Tis to think that narrow reason
 Boundless being and love can grasp.
But our guesses not confounding
With the truth, and lowly bending
 Down our heads, we yet may say:
If no evil, if no battle,
 If no barriers in our way,
Where would shine the sun of justice?
Where would be the victory glorious?
 Where her face would Mercy show?

How had Christ from heaven descended,
Seeking out the stole of woe?
Seeking, finding priceless treasure,
Sinless, stricken down to suffer.
Ah ! how great had been the loss
If no place for tears of sorrow,
For the lovers of the cross.

SINTRAM.

Sister, in my soul thou wakenest
Memories of days departed,
Sounds of sweet and soothing voice,
Bidding me in darkest hour
Comfort take and still rejoice ;
Telling of the sinless mother,
All her heart with sorrow riven,
Evermore a refuge sure,
And the teacher of her children
How to suffer and endure.
I must leave thee now, but often
From mine iron-gated castle
Hither let my footsteps turn ;
Here in light amidst the darkness,
As a child to sit and learn.

SCENE III.—*Biorn's Castle. The great hall.*

A banquet. BIORN, ASTOLFO, and many Knights seated at the table. Attendants.

BIORN.

Wilt thou watch the ancient ritual,
When, the boar's-head goblet grasping,
Vows we utter and requests?
Then the overflowing goblet
Passes round to all the guests.
Each returning joyous Yule-tide
Sees us faithful to this custom;
Only once 'twas broken through,
And the cup away was hidden
From monk Folko and his crew.
But I fear that with thy learning,
For thy fame hath travelled hither,
Thou may'st deem our Northern ways
Wisdom lacking and refinement,
Rude and rugged as our lays.

ASTOLFO.

O Sir Biorn, knights and singers,
Humbly pardon must I ask you,

If from any words of mine
Ye have thought of me I loved not
Prayers and vows and rites divine.
Ah ! how much ye do mistake me :
All the ways of old delight me,
Ancient customs to explore,
Simple legends hear repeated,
Solemn rituals to restore.
Poor and dull would life be truly,
Lacking noblest crown of culture,
Did we make religion dumb ;
Let all forms of beauteous worship
With their priests most welcome come.
Wondrous is our being and complex,
That we need our every portion
Should its proper food receive ;
Faculties we have of worship,
Aspirations to believe.
Train these faculties, and nourish
Sweet religious aspirations
As ye train your other powers,
That your lives be all harmonious,
And your ways be strewn with
flowers.

Thus the wise men of the ancients
Consecrated their emotions,
 O'er their loves sweet Venus reigned,
Bacchus gladsome made their feastings,
 Cravings each their god obtained.
Gods and goddesses abounding
 Mingled joyously with mortals ;
 While who loved the cloud-capped
heights
Found a charm in awestruck worship,
 Vast abysses, endless nights :
E'en for these were Fates unbending,
 Bolts of Jove, wheel-bound Ixion,
 Nemesis that none could stay.
Bring the boar's-head out, my comrades,
 Much I have to vow and pray.
And to prove my dispositions,
 One more word ye'll let me utter,
 Though of blame it is a word :
Priest within this noble castle
 None ye suffer, so I've heard.
O ye Norsemen, all so earnest,
 All so narrow, not perceiving
 For all things there is a place :

Keep the good old festive custom :
Ask the priest to say the grace.
Juxtapose the priest and boar's-head ;
Be wide-minded, and supposing
One his flesh would mortify,
Sacerdotal ways would follow,
Hinder not that he should try.
'Tis a part of life's great fulness
That not few should have such cravings.
But, my comrades, we are free,
Holding human joy and friendship
Noblest worship far to be.
Bending not our knees, nor raising
Piteous cries for help, but holding
Better part that each should say :
I myself enthroned as sovereign,
Inward judge alone obey.
Free we live from forward looking
To a dread and vengeful judgment ;
Free from sense of shame and sin,
Fearless in our world enlightened,
Free without and free within.
Let us then the ancient custom
Gladly, reverently follow ;

Let them bring the golden boar.
 Nay, e'en now they surely bring it,
 Slowly openeth the door.

[*The figure of DEATH appears at the door, but is seen only by ASTQLFO who stares in horror.*]

BIORN.

Nay, 'tis shut ; the golden boar's-head
 In this hall for ever stayeth,
 Guarded in yon iron chest.
 But why gaze upon the doorway
 As though entered some strange guest ?

A GUEST.

Sudden sickness must have seized him :
 Hold him, or he falleth downward

A SECOND GUEST.

Send for a physician.

A THIRD GUEST.

Seek

Quick the chaplain.

DISCIPLE OF ASTOLFO.

Press not round him.

Master, look upon me, speak.

[ASTOLFO keeps gazing horror-stricken
at the door. His disciple clings to
him. The guests look on spell-bound.
From the doorway DEATH speaks,
and is heard only by ASTOLFO, his
words being to the rest as the moaning
of a sudden wind.]

DEATH.

Come forth, thou wretched soul ; thine hour of
grace is past,

Thine hour of triumph o'er, the reckoning come
at last.

In vain a thousand times a gentle voice hath
called :

“O come and be my child, no more by sin
enthralled.”

In vain thy father pleaded, in vain a mother's
voice

Implored thy foward heart to leave its evil
choice ;

In vain a thousand warnings were sounded in
thine ear
To fear the living God and leave all other fear.
But thou hast sought thyself, and ah ! thyself
hast found,
Now to thyself alone for ever to be bound.
As thou hast been, still be, unchanged for
evermore,
Thine heart with every good in everlasting war.
And as thou hast on earth, while boasting to be
free,
Served as the slave of sin, blown like an aspen-tree
By blast of open passion or gust of secret pride,
Man's privilege of strife ignobly cast aside,
A slave thou shalt remain, by self-love rent and
torn,
And ever wear the chains that thou on earth
hast worn.
Thy tree hath fallen now, must lie as it doth fall.
God hast thou lost, and thus hast lost thine all
in all.
The Bridegroom hath passed in, closed is the
heavenly gate ;
Wisegrowest thou at last, but ah ! too late, too late.

Come forth, and leave thy friends ; all friendship
now is o'er,
No voice of happy welcome to hear for evermore,
And light and joy no more, nor loving heart to
know :
Come forth to endless darkness, come forth to
endless woe.

[ASTOLFO sinks back dead in his chair.]

THIRD GUEST.

Good God ! he's dead, and all unready gone
To meet his great Creator, e'en with word
Of mockery on his lips. Here shall we stay
Till God's just vengeance strike yet once again
This impious festival. Oh, let's away !

[All the guests hurry away, leaving
BIORN standing alone.]

BIORN.

All have hastened forth in terror ;
Lingered last his fond disciple,
Then appalled in anguish fled.
But for me, I'll stay undaunted
All alone beside the dead.

[Enter LITTLE MASTER.]

LITTLE MASTER.

Not alone, for let me bear thee
 Company as friend familiar ;
 Nor think here applies the saying :
 “Company makes two, not three,” where
 Number three is quite past praying.

BIORN.

Ah ! my friend, at all times ready
 With thy laughter and thy jesting,
 Take thy seat, and let us twain
 Fill with wine the cup neglected,
 Drink and fill it full again.

*[Brings out the boar's-head cup and
 fills it.]*

LITTLE MASTER.

Noble lord, thou art forgetting
 Duties due to guests. The stranger
 Sitting there talks not : no matter ;
 Drink he wants ; the sow that's silent
 Sups the most and makes no chatter.
 Let us prop him up. He promised

He would drink from out the boar's-head ;
Suffer not he break his word.
Truth, thou know'st, I love it fondly ;
So did he, from what I've heard.

[*They prop up the corpse of ASTOLFO
and pour wine from the boar's-head
down the throat. Then the LITTLE
MASTER pushes the corpse, and it
falls on the floor.*]

Fie ! he's drunk, and stand he cannot.
Here a question nice arises ;
Drink he swore he would : a liar
Thus must be, or else a drunkard ;
Which is right, may I inquire ?

[*BIORN laughs boisterously.*]

Absolvatur, for by no means
Was his soul drunk, and his body
Ne'er did swear ; so let's sit down,
And I'll tell a pretty story
Of an abbess, monk, and clown.

[*They sit down, drink, laugh, and
whisper together.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Fisherman's Cottage.* RURI
on his sick-bed, ULRICA sitting beside him.

ULRICA.

My wedding nosegay lacks a flower ;
To-morrow brings not perfect joy.
Oh, would I had a fairy's power,
And with my wand I'd touch thy brow,
And make thee well this very hour,
And, when the music bade us dance,
The gayest dancer thou would'st be,
And singer none would dare advance
To be thy rival, for thy notes
Would e'en the nightingale entrance.

[Kisses him and weeps.

RURIC.

Thou dearest, foolish sister mine,
How often would'st thou have me say
Thou must for my sake ne'er repine ?
But let to-morrow's golden sun
Upon thy joy unsullied shine.
And if I dance not in thy sight,
Nor raise my voice in outward song,

A merry festival and bright
I'll keep within, and dance and leap,
In spirit sharing thy delight.
And here as judge I'll sit in state,
 And if thy Guthred please thee not,
A judgment stern shall him await
 In this my court. Nay, bring him now ;
I hear his footsteps at the gate.

[*Exit ULRICA. RURIC groans and shows signs of great pain.*]

My God, Thy sweetest will be ever done !
Oh, welcome cross, that brings me close to
 Thee !
But yet in mercy this one favour give,
That the bright morrow's joy I may not
 mar,
And for their sake e'en yet awhile may live.

[*Enter ULRICA and GUTHRED. RURIC greets them with a smile.*]

You bring him here within my reach,
 But ah ! so good that I forget
The sermon I had meant to preach,—
 The husband's duty to submit,
And learn whate'er the wife may teach.

GUTHRED.

It gives me joy to see thee gay,
 To see thee smile ; and I would hear
 Thy sermon gladly, but to-day
 A nobler visitor hath come,
 Sir Sintram, so we must not stay.

[*Exeunt ULRICA and GUTHRED. Ent.*
 SINTRAM.]

SINTRAM.

Ah ! Ruric, on my homeward ride
 I met thy father, and he said
 I should be welcome at thy side,
 And that to-morrow's joyous morn
 Will see thy sister Guthred's bride.

[*Takes his seat beside the bed of RURI*
smoothes his pillow, shades his eyes

RURIC.

Sir Sintram, suffer that my smile
 May tell my welcome, for my words
 Just now are scanty—wait awhile
 [He gasps for breath]

And I will speak. How good ye are
My lingering sickness to beguile.

[*A pause. Then SINTRAM begins speaking to himself in a voice low at first and then louder.*]

SINTRAM.

He called me good ! Are all men liars ?
It was not goodness brought me here ;
My heart is hot with evil fires,
And I am driven to obey
The rule of passionate desires.

'Tis noonday, yet the sun's bright seat
Is dark as night ; the solid earth
Doth open wide beneath my feet,
And hundred hellish voices sound
Another reprobate to greet.

For friends no more I care, nor kin ;
Naught brings me joy, and I would leap
Into the gulf of every sin,
But that some power holds me back,
Some voice I cannot hush within.

And thus each day I'm torn in twain,
And cannot more endure, and come
To witness here the hopeless pain
Another helpless victim bears :
Is this the world where God doth reign ?

RURIC [*with energy*].

Stay, stay those words with evil freight
All heavy laden ; they are his
Who darkens all our soul with hate,
A veil o'erspreading lest we see
The light and love that round us wait.

Ah ! Sintram, when the sentence dread
We heard, my sickness e'en in death
Must surely end, and hope had fled,
And poverty pressed on us sore,
And bitter tears my mother shed :

The chaplain spoke on bended knee :
“ The stricken soul God loveth most ;
And be not downcast ; is not He
The joy of heaven and your joy,
Who hung for you upon the tree ?

He loves in sorrowing hearts to reign ;
And who is poor possessing Him ?
And by His heavenly touch our pain
Becomes a sweet o'erflowing spring
Of endless good, unmeasured gain.

Thy faltering voice shall intercede,
Thine helpless hands shall blessings bring
On dearest friend or greatest need,
On father, mother, brethren all,
And all for whom thine heart doth bleed."

And thus he made me gladly greet
The sharpest pangs as golden gifts.
How good is God to me ! How sweet
He makes my path, and bids me tread
Where trod before His wounded feet.

[*After a pause.*] But pardon that your ears I fill
With talking of myself ; had I
But half your sorrows, I should ill
Endure them—but a faintness comes—
Awhile I needs—must lie me still.

[*He sinks back on the bed panting.*
SINTRAM holds his hand awhile,
then rises and goes to the window.]

SINTRAM [aside].

Is knighthood mine? His face grew dark
A moment with o'er-mastering pain,
Yet no complaining word.—But hark!
What song is this I hear without,
Like sweetest note of soaring lark?

RURIC [faintly].

My little sister from the croft
Returning, to my casement comes
And sings the song I sang so oft,
Our cattle driving joyously
To summer pastures far aloft.
[ULLA appears before the window and sing

ULLA.

The winter is over, the south wind is blowin
The streamlets are leaping, the rivers a
flowing,
The lads and the lasses all merry are going
Aloft to the meadows on high.
See, now they have come to the edge of the
snow

Where freshest and sweetest the green grass
doth grow,
And the gentian her blue head the brightest doth
show,
The nearer the arch of the sky.
And the bells of the cattle they tingle so clear,
That down on the fiord the shipmate can hear,
And longs as he thinks of a heart that is dear :
Oh, would that to thee I could fly !

SCENE V.—*Moonrock Castle.* *The WARDEN*
lying on his sick-bed, a Priest, the CHAPLAIN,
by his side. Enter SINTRAM. The CHAP-
LAIN rises.

CHAPLAIN.

Enter softly ; here, Sir Sintram,
Sit beside the dying man's pillow ;
Welcome glisteneth in his eyes.
He awaits you, and his story
Longs to tell you ere he dies.

[Exit CHAPLAIN. SINTRAM sits by the
WARDEN, who speaks slowly and
solemnly.]

THE WARDEN.

Sir Sintram, hear me. Ah ! long years ago
A boy in blithesome innocence was I,
Unknown the dismal path of sin and woe,
First in adventure, nor was cliff so high
But I could scale it all along our shore,
And well each truth of holy faith I knew.
Then other teachers came, and friends no more
Like those of old, and a new being I grew.
I listened in my folly, heard them say
All ended with life's end and naught was known
Beyond ; and how the wise man every day
All pleasant things of life should make his own
And pluck with joy each flower. What they said
But half believing, yet I wholly fell,
Till wearied once of wickedness, I fled
Along the cliff-path that I knew so well.
The sweet still evening came, and all the air
Was full of perfume from the flowers that grew
So thick around, and sight I saw so fair :
The sun, ere sinking in a mist of blue,
Spread a broad belt of gently rippling gold
O'er the white waters of the western sea.

I gazed, and felt within my heart grow cold,
For beauty's source and home was not for
me.

Then turning back, in books profound I sought
To still the pain that ever gnawed my breast,
And wandering weary thro' the fields of thought
To seek a place wherein my soul to rest.

Renown I won and wealth ; and yet the weal
I sought for came not ; but within the cry :
It needs but one small piece of pointed steel,
And lo ! the lore thou hast is all gone by.
Then, angry at my helplessness, once more
I plunged in vice and cast aside the name
Of honour, wisdom, virtue that I bore,
And as a cynic gloried in my shame.

But even thus I could not still the voice
That whispered truth and substance were
divine,

All else false fleeting shadows, and the choice
Of life eternal or of death was mine.

But yet I would not listen, and each day
In guilt grew bolder, till at last I slew
Some rival, and from justice fled away.

The ship was driven by a wind that blew

With fury from the west upon this land ;
Alone of shipmates all I reached the shore,
Cast 'mid two rocks upon a strip of sand,
I that of all on life the least set store.
Two fisher-lads came by, bore me with care
Up to their father's hut, and there I lay,
While those poor cottagers did nothing spare
Of their scant substance, watching night and
day,
All thro' my sickness, offering many a prayer
For me who had forgotten how to pray,
And only passed from sickness to despair,
Longing for death, but dreading the dark way.
They led me to Sir Biorn ; him I told
Of my past life some portion ; quick he saw
In me a spirit desperate and bold,
Not conscience, but his will to be my law.
The warden of the Moonrock dungeon fell
He made me, ready any deed to dare.
For years I worked his will but all too well,
And each year heavier grew my load of
care.
Then out I drew my sword to take away
My life, when lo ! I heard the passing bell

That bids the hearer for a dying man pray.
I stayed my hand, and on my knees I fell,
That had not knelt for years, and the old prayer
Once more my lips did utter, and once more
Came hope that I might yet redemption share,
Came will to bend my proud head and adore.
I vowed to God the remnant of my life,
To use against His foes my every breath ;
But, lest I should turn back from this new strife,
God's mercy sent this sickness unto death.
And in my troubled sleep I dreamt a dream,
That Ruric, clad in robes all glittering bright,
Led a veiled figure, that like mine did seem,
Before the mercy-throne on heaven's height ;
Whence came a voice : "Thy prayer of pain is
heard."
I woke, and asked for whom a funeral-knell
Was tolling, and they went and brought me
word ;
'Twas for a fisherman beyond the dell,
Long sick, of no account. Yet his the deed
And his the prayer that raised my soul again.
[He gasps for breath, and then, after a pause,
continues very faintly and slowly.]

God grant thee one who for thine hour of need
Will pray in sickness, poverty, and pain.

SINTRAM.

Ah ! his voice and strength have failed him ;
Life away is ebbing quickly,
Feet and hands grow deadly cold.

[Calls at the door.] Let the chaplain hasten
hither,

And the passing bell be tolled.

[Enter the CHAPLAIN and ROLF. All kneel
round the dying man. Presently the
passing bell is heard, and the CHAPLAIN
begins the "Commendatio animæ."]

CHAPLAIN.

To God Almighty I commend thy soul,
To Him who did create thee, dearest brother,
That, when our nature's debt thou shalt have
paid
And sunk in death, then surely in His arms
Who drew thee from the dust thou mayst be
laid.

And as thy soul forth from thy body goes,
Let the bright angels meet thee, and enthroned
 In judgment let the Apostles sit around,
And conquering host of white-robed martyrs
 come,
And choir of virgins all with lilies crowned.

Confessors, patriarchs, prophets, let them come
To meet thee and to fold thee in their arms,
 And O may Christ with sweet and gentle face
Await thee, and among that blessed throng
 Who e'er stand by Him bid thee take thy place.

And never may'st thou know the darkness dread,
Nor the tormenting fire ; and in fear
 Let foulest Satan and his crew take flight
Before the angels that around thee stand
 Into the chaos of eternal night.

Let God arise and scattered be His foes,
And those who hate Him flee ; and as the smoke
 Doth vanish, and as wax doth melt away
Before the fire, so the wicked all
 Will fail and fall and perish in God's day.

**May Christ, who hung in torments on the cross
All for thy sake, from torments save thee now;**

**May Christ, who death of ignominy died
All for thy sake, from everlasting death
Thy soul preserve, and place thee at His side.**

**May Christ, the Son of the Eternal God,
And the true Shepherd who doth know His sheep
Acknowledge thee His own, and bid thee stay
In the green pastures of His Paradise,
All stain of sin for ever washed away.**

**And may'st thou reach this day thy goal, and
gaze
On thy Redeemer face to face, and see
All truth unveiled, and know for evermore,
Amid the blest companions of thy joy,
How sweet thy God to love and to adore.**

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Convent at Drontheim.* SINTRAM,
THORA.

SINTRAM.

Sister, sister ! I am weary,
Compassed all with ill around me,
 Daily drawn to do some wrong,
Bringing forth no fruits of virtue,
 Idly dragging life along.
Years thirteen within the Moonrock
Have I dwelt, and every winter
 Back my dreadful dreams return ;
More and more for our poor father
 Doth my heart with longing yearn.
Ah ! he still with evil comrades
Pagan rites and oaths doth follow,
 Lawless warfare makes, and never
Suffers priest his home to enter :
 Is it so to be for ever ?

THORA.

Courage, brother ; not for ever ;
For the dawn at last will glimmer,
 And the storm-wind cease to blow,
Green and gold the meadows glisten,
 Where was spread the waste of snow.
Tell me not thy life is worthless :
Even here within the cloister
 Sounds the echo of thy deeds, .
How the multitude of toilers
 Turn to thee in all their needs ;
How so oft the mighty Biorn
Thou hast drawn from evil warfare,
 Ancient feuds hast made to cease,
Built again the ruined homesteads,
 Been the messenger of peace.
Dost thou suffer strife within thee ?
'Tis a sign that thou art chosen
 E'en the noblest part to take,
Heavy burdens gladly bearing,
 Easy road for others to make.
Nay, and now to thee is trusted
High emprise of heavenly knighthood,

That a captive soul be freed ;
For upon our hapless father
Cometh hour of utmost need.
Hearken well unto my message :
Go at nightfall on the morrow,
Enter once again his hall ;
But prepare as I shall tell thee,
Lest thou waver, halt, and fall.
Tread to-day the winding pathway
Through the fir-wood's fragrant mazes,
Till thou reach the hermit's cell ;
He will know thy visit's purpose,
E'en to hear a voice from hell.
Ah ! those depths of woe eternal :
Yet if wisdom, justice, mercy,
Ne'er had framed that dread abode,
Who amongst us dare make boasting
He would tread the upward road.
And if God at last must pardon,
Then at last his foes would triumph,
Unrepented, mocking sin
'Mid the penitent and sinless,
Place of endless joy would win.
Needful then a doom eternal,

Needful fear for spirit wavering,
 Needful rock whereon is built
Fortress that shall ne'er surrender.
 To the powers of shame and guilt,

SINTRAM.

I will do thy bidding, sister,
Only with thy prayers uphold me.

THORA.

Fare thee well, my brother dear.
In the name of Christ go forward,
Mortal conflict draweth near.

SCENE II.—HERMIT'S cell. Evening. A HERMIT in prayer, who rises as SINTRAM enters.

HERMIT.

Son, I know full well the purpose
That hath brought thee through the forest
 To my cell, thou child of sorrow;
Voice within me plainly telleth
 Mighty issue on the morrow.

God hath heard thy sister's pleading,
Bids a soul from hell's abysses
 Bear unwilling witness here,
Truth proclaim 'mid wails despairing,
 Fill thee with a saving fear.
I must quit thee : kneeling humbly
Here await the voice revealing
 Secrets of the hopeless land ;
Lest perchance thy senses fail thee,
 Grasp a cross in thy right hand.
Kneel and listen ; never question
Must thou ask, and when are ended
 Words and sounds of hell, outpour
Prayers to Him who victory giveth,
 Then go forth, delay no more.

[*Exit HERMIT. SINTRAM grasps a crucifix and kneels. Presently a moaning is heard from below, and then a voice as of one in pain.]*

LOST SOUL.

I speak because I must, and witness give
Unwillingly constrained ; for if my will
 Could work its way, thy body would I tear

Into ten thousand fragments, and endow
Each with a soul, the greater pain to bear.
And these ten thousand all I would cast down
E'en to the darkest deepest pit of hell,
And heap upon them unimagined woe,
Because I see reflected in thy soul
The hated image of my heavenly foe.
For hatred doth consume mine inmost being,
All good perforce I hate in hating God,
And could'st thou place me in the heaven
above,
Freed from my fiery chains, that I might see
The sights of beauty, hear the songs of love :
No joy could be my part ; for every flower
In that celestial garden, every note
Of music wafted from the angelic choirs,
And every soul and spirit of the blest,
Would kindle in mine heart the deadly fires.
For God alone is source of all their good ;
And Him I hold in hatred uttermost,
And cannot seek the good that is my bane,
And, torn asunder, idly strive ; nor end
Is to be found, or respite to my pain.
I speak because I must : mine innocence

I lost, and then my faith ; and as I passed
Within hell's gates, they closed with dreadful
 clang
Behind me, and more dreadful all around
 The molten walls with fiendish laughter
 rang.
“ Fool ! fool ! ” re-echoed through the laden air,
“ The jewel of thy soul to cast away,
 That thou might’st wallow in a filthy pool
For a brief instant, and as wisdom hold
 An idle sophistry, accursèd fool.”
And all too clearly then I saw my life,
I saw my folly, and the worm began
 To gnaw that dieth not ; and the foul weight
Fell on me of my sins, and vain remorse ;
 And I believed in God, but all too late.
My changeless portion now the second death
With all the wicked ; nor hath friendship place
 Amongst us, but fierce enmity of hell,
And endless unbefriended solitude,
 Our love all gone for those we loved so well.
Our cries of fruitless rage unceasing sound,
Yet ne’er the idle blasphemies of earth
 Are heard, for heavenly justice shines so clear

That none in hell can murmur, nor complaint
Can utter, but can only hate and fear.
And dreadful envy rends our hearts in twain
As the unnumbered throng of blessed souls
Mounts upward to the Father's home above,
The poor, the simple, and the penitent, while we
Are outcasts evermore from every love.
I speak because I must : there is a place
That had been thine in hell, if ne'er betimes
Had stayed thine headlong course some hid-
den power ;
A place so dreadful could thine eyes behold,
That thou wouldst sink in death that very
hour.
I speak because I must : bid thee take heed,
For the eternal dungeon yet is thine,
Unless thou conquer in the coming strife :
Take heed, beware, the issue all supreme
Is death unending or unending life.

[*A horrible moaning is heard. SINTRAM continues in prayer, and presently rises and leaves the cell in silence.*]

SCENE III.—BIORN'S Castle. Great hall.

BIORN and the LITTLE MASTER seated,
the golden boar's-head between them, from
which they drink. Suits of armour lean
propped up against the table by every seat.
Enter SINTRAM.

SINTRAM.

Father, who doth sit beside thee
As thy guest?

BIORN.

So long, my Sintram,
Hast thou this mine hall forsaken,
That my comrade here hath entered,
And thy vacant place hath taken.
But no matter ; thrust behind thee
One of these old suits of armour ;
Take the place and make it thine,
Join our pledges o'er the boar's-head,
Fragrant with the southern wine.

LITTLE MASTER.

Join us, noble lord Sir Sintram,
And if haply rise a spectre

From the armour overthrown,
O'er your shoulder peep, what harm!
Well, he'll leave our wine alone.
Come and join us, never falter,
Drain the wine-cup ; songs and laugh
Mingle with the wine—and more—
For delights I here can bring you
Passing all assayed before.
Gabrielle still lives and loves you ;
Time her beauty hath not lessened,
Gloweth fresh her colour still,
Still the form and smile bewitching—
She is yours if ye but will.
Even now upon the waters
Back to him who holds her captive
Sadly, slowly she doth sail :—
Grant me days but three : she cometh
Driven here by magic gale.
O'er the winds ye know my power,
And as earnest of her coming,
See the loved one ye desire :
[A phantom of GABRIELLE app.
very beautiful and weeping.]
How the longing for your presence

Burns her heart with secret fire.
Pledge substantial, instant pleasure
Will ye have? Then fairest maiden,
 Of the peasants, e'er this hour,
Otto's sweetest sister Ulla
 Here shall stand within your power.
Drain but once this sparkling goblet :
Riseth straightway on your darkness
 Ulla like the star of morning,
Harbinger of golden sunrise,
 Gabrielle the heavens adorning.
Drink : ye need the cup of gladness.

BIORN.

Wherefore dost thou turn in silence
 On my guest a face so wan?
Once I thought thee wondrous like him,
 But all likeness now hath gone.

SINTRAM.

God forgive me that such likeness
E'er my guilty face o'ershadowed.
[To the LITTLE MASTER.] Guest, thou
 hast most rightly said

That I need the boar's-head goblet
 And the draught of deep blood-red.

[*He seizes the cup, and with a stroke of his sword severs it in twain, and lets it fall upon the floor, all the wine being spilt.*]

Spilt be all thy deadly venom,
 Cup of heathendom and foulness ;
 Shattered let the fragments lie ;
 And away, vile guest, I bid thee,
 In the name of God most high.

[*The LITTLE MASTER flies amid strange noise. All the lights go out, and in the glimmer are seen the spectres of the dead knights, each over his armour.*]

BIORN.

Son, thou art not here the master ;
 Cam'st unbidden to our feasting ;
 Now hast loosed the spectres all,
 And I see amid the darkness
 Ghastly faces fill the hall.
 Oh, that hither Little Master

Back would come with merry jesting !
Ah ! he cometh, and the door
Openeth.

SINTRAM.

Father, if he entereth,
We are lost for evermore.

BIORN.

Enter, for it was not Biorn
Bid thee forth into the darkness ;
'Tis my will that thou should'st stay.

SINTRAM.

God in heaven, give me courage,
Give me strength to kneel and pray.
[Kneeling.] Great Judge of all the living and
the dead,
Man's author and defender, who hast willed
Celestial likeness on our souls to set,
Oh, suffer not that here Thine enemy
Approach to snare Thy servants in his net.
[Standing up.] Get thee gone, thou ancient
serpent ;
By the Holy Spirit's power

I adjure thee, speed thee forth ;
Back to depths of hell profoundest
Flee, thou vessel of God's wrath.

[*Kneeling again.*] O Victor who upon the
cross o'ercam'st

Both sin and death, and the ill work undidst
Done by the first transgressor, hearken, Lord !
Nor let the foe make boast that all in vain
For us Thy suppliants Thy blood was poured.

[*Standing up again.*] Wicked tempter,
cease thy troubling ;

Christ hath conquered, and His children
Trample on thee, martyrs all,
Virgins, penitents, confessors,
At their feet thou needs must fall.

[*Kneeling again.*] O Lamb of God, immaculate
and true,

Who treadest on the asp and basilisk,
And mak'st the serpent and the lion as dust,
And hast been slain that we might ever live :
Oh, save us now ; in Thee is all our trust.

[*A furious tempest arises. SINTRAM continues praying. BIORN falls back in a swoon on his chair.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Moonrock Castle. Outside the chapel door.* The CHAPLAIN. SINTRAM.

CHAPLAIN.

Sintram, now the hour approaches
Both for thee and for thy father
 All decisive. Once again
Must thou forth to face the darkness,
 Reach the house of guilt and pain.
Nobly yesternight thou foughtest
In thy father's hall, an earnest
 Of the issue of to-night ;
To the Moonrock I recalled thee,
 That thou should'st be armed aright :
Armed with justice as thy breastplate,
For thy sword God's Word all piercing,
 Girt with truth thy loins around,
Bearing shield of faith that casteth
 Hell's darts quenched upon the ground.
Thou hast prayed thro' all the hours,
While hath lain thy father senseless,
 Closed in trance his flaming eyes,
Closed as if for aye ; yet surely

He will wake before he dies :
Wake and gaze with utmost terror
Who shall pass beneath the lintel,
Messenger of heaven or hell ;
All is lost if come that other ;
If 'tis thou, then all is well.
I will follow, but the entry
Thou the first to make art chosen,
First to melt the heart of stone ;
I will follow, but the dark road
Thou must tread it all alone.
Ride in all thy knightly armour,
Token of thy noble office,
Witness of thy noble life,
Symbol of the ghostly armour
Needed for the inward strife.
Forward ride, let nothing turn thee
From thy course that is appointed ;
Nor will rise the powers of night
Whilst from turret of this chapel
Shines behind thee friendly light.
But at last, in winding defile,
Rocks on either side o'erhanging,
Friendly light will all be hidden,

Hell will seek to turn thee backward
From the course that thou art bidden.
Turn not back tho' darkness veil thee,
Tho' to fall the heavens threaten,
Tho' the earth asunder crack,
And the rocks close in around thee :
In God's name, oh ! turn not back !

SINTRAM.

Oh, that God should choose a vessel
Weak as I for such great purpose !

CHAPLAIN.

Weakness is thy strength this hour ;
For 'tis written : E'en made perfect
In infirmity is power.

SCENE V.—*A narrow rocky defile. Faint lurid light. Reptiles creep on all sides. The LITTLE MASTER, now undisguisedly an evil spirit, hideous and of mighty stature, blocks the way.* Enter SINTRAM in armour on his war-horse, and beside him DEATH, in cowl and long robe, riding a small horse.

SINTRAM.

See, thou sad and strange companion,
Some one bars the narrow causeway,
And I scarcely can discern
Whether man it is or monster
Fiercely bids us backward turn.

DEATH.

Only One can turn me backward ;
'Tis not He : all others vainly
Seek to stay mine onward course.
Wilt thou pass ? 'Tis I will help thee,
Not thy spear, nor shield, nor horse.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Fool ! turn backward ; death awaits thee
If one step thou makest forward.



Nay, already at thy side
Rideth Death ; for yet thy comrade
Closely thou hast not descried.
[*The robe falls from DEATH, who appears as a skeleton with an hour-glass in his hand.*]
Wilt thou onward ? Wilt thou suffer
Grinning skeleton to clutch thee,
Quench thy life in torments slow ?

SINTRAM.

If the will of God ordaineth,
E'en with Death I'll forward go.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Fool accurst in thine abjection !
Feeding hopes with fond illusions,
Boasting thou hast bravely striven :
I, who know the nether secrets,
Tell thee thou art not forgiven.
Fool ! To me thou would'st not listen,
Would'st not drink the cup of pleasure,
When I sought thee as a friend,
And didst think by prayers and watchings
Joys to gain that would not end.

Fool ! for both have slipped thy grasping,
 Earth and heaven, pleasure, virtue ;
 All is over : hear thy knell.

[A bell is heard sounding loud and harsh.]

Thou hast sinned past all forgiveness,
 And thine endless doom is hell.

SINTRAM.

'Tis written : Though your sins like crimson be,
 O Israel, white as wool they shall be made,
 And come and try me now, so saith the Lord ;
 And be your sins like scarlet, they shall be
 Like snow upon the hill-tops freshly poured.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Fool ! again thine hopes are idle :
 Even had'st thou now forgiveness,
 Never could'st thou persevere,
 Never live the life of virtue,
 With a thousand tempters near :
 World and flesh and evil spirits
 Compass all the ways around thee,
 Thou wilt fall as in the past ;

He who made thee will ensnare thee,
Cast thee down to hell at last.

SINTRAM.

'Tis written : As a father for his child /
Compassion hath, so hath the Lord our God
For us His children, knowing well our frame,
Long-suffering, in mercy plenteous,
Remembering the dust from whence we came.

EVIL SPIRIT

Self-deceiver, blind and foolish !
Thinkest thou to live in virtue,
Die in peace, where others failed ?
What have Ruric's prayers and moanings,
What the warden's tears availed ?
Both in deepest hell are buried,
Lost for ever ; and in foulness,
'Neath fair mantle overdrawn,
Live thy Gabrielle and Folko :
Better they had ne'er been born.

SINTRAM,

'Tis written : Slanderous accuser thou,
Man's adversary, falsehood's first contriver.

But now the sinless second Eve thine head
Hath crushed. O Satan ! flee, for He doth bid
Whose name is full of majesty and dread.

[*The EVIL SPIRIT disappears with a dreadful cry of rage and terror. The rocks seem to close in, the earth to gape.*]

[*To DEATH.*] Come, thou faithful friend beside
me,

Let us onward ; grasp my bridle.

Ah ! thy face hath grown so soft,
Like the mists of early morning
Melting as they rise aloft.

[*The way opens, and SINTRAM and DEATH ride onward.*]

SCENE VI.—BIORN'S *Castle*. BIORN lying in
his sick chamber. THE CHAPLAIN near the
door.

CHAPLAIN.

Sintram waiteth near, and quickly
Shall be with thee.

[*Exit. Enter SINTRAM.*]

BIORN.

Welcome, Sintram.

Sit thee here beside my bed ;
Message yet I have to give thee
Ere they lay me 'mid the dead.

SINTRAM.

O my father ! must thou leave me,
Leave me when thou scarce hast clasped
me
To thine arms in love once more ?
Must our lives, in joy united,
Ah ! be sundered as before ?
Let me nurse thee in thy sickness,
Let me watch thee, guard thee, serve thee,
Till thy locks are white as snow.
Dost thou shake thine head so sadly ?
O my father ! must thou go ?

BIORN.

I must go, yet not asunder
Need we live, but close united,
Linked in bonds of faith, my son.

As thou lovest me, be joyful,
For the victory is won.
Listen, Sintram, and my message
Bear to Thora and to Astrid,
Tell them that my dying breath
Witness gives of God's compassion,
All so easy making death.
Death no more the frightful spectre,
Ever lurking in the darkness,
Waiting for the dreaded hour,
Then to throttle us in torments,
Crush us with relentless power.
Ah ! not so, my son, if only
Hands upraised in supplication,
Hearts with sorrow smitten be ;
Then, thro' doors of grace wide opened,
Death as ancient friend we see :
Friend that sets us free from bondage,
Friend that through the years expected
Naught but evil doth destroy,
And our darkness lifting, leads us
Into sunlight, into joy :
Light that fades not, joy that ends not.
Oh, the loving Heart and wounded

That with blood our debts hath paid !
Oh, how sweet to die, when dying
God hath all so easy made !

[He sinks back exhausted. SINTRAM
buries his face in his hands. Presently is heard without a child's
voice singing.

CHILD [sings].

The storm is passed ; the mighty banks of
cloud
Sink eastward, and each moist and glistening
field
Fresh flowers now and verdant grass doth
yield :
Soft murmureth the wind that was so loud,
And waters that seemed nigh to be their shroud
The sailors see all sparkling, and revealed
The azure depths ; and Nature's scars are
healed,
And many a head in grateful prayer is bowed.
For us one day will all life's storms be past,
If the true Pilot we will take as guide ;
For he will make our ship securely ride

O'er the tempestuous sea, and come at last
To the sweet haven free from every blast
'Mid flowers and sunshine ever to abide.

BIORN.

Who without has sung so sweetly,
Voice of innocence upraising
Like the warbling of a bird ?

SINTRAM.

'Tis the little lad who leadeth
Rolf the blind, that thou hast heard,

BIORN.

Rolf ! that name recalls another.
[In altered tone.] Bloodless are thy lips,
Verena.

Say, oh ! why doth toll that bell ?
Closed her eyes, and unawakened
By the deep-resounding knell.
Is she dead ?—O God ! Thy judgment
On mine evil life hath fallen !—
[In his former tone.] Ah ! but all Thy
ways are love :

Broken was our earthly union
To be knit for ever above.

[*Faintly.*] Voice doth fail me—children,
pardon !
Motherless—

SINTRAM.

O father ! father !
Melts mine heart with grief away ;
Draweth near the hour of parting ?
Canst thou, ah ! no longer stay ?

[*He falls weeping by the bedside, and
BIORN lays his hand on SINTRAM's
head.*]

SCENE VII.—*Drontheim Convent. The CHAPLAIN speaking to THORA.*

CHAPLAIN.

Scarce had glimmered yet the dawning,
When in haste I left the Moonrock,
And within my breast a voice
Whispered soft : The day that riseth
Many hearts will make rejoice.

Ne'er before so bright the daystar
From the vault of dark blue glistened ;
 Ne'er so lovely as that morn
Strove the clouds of pearl and ruby
 All the heavens to adorn ;
Ne'er with such a golden radiance
Rose at last the sun upon us ;
 Mists and darkness sped away,
Symbol of the Sun of justice
 Rising for eternal day.
On I journeyed, neared the castle,
Closed for many a year before me,
 Out I saw a horseman ride,
Bearing message from his master
 That I hasten to his side.
In the portal Sintram met me,
Ruddy was his face, and glowing
 Bright with more than morning ray ;
Not a word he spoke, but led me
 Where his dying father lay.
Mercy, justice met together ;
Forth was poured the blood redeeming ;
 Washed away was every stain,
And the pure celestial Spirit

Living temple found again.
Then awhile I left thy father
Sweetly with his son communing
Till at last there came the call,
That the inmates of the castle
Gather round the deathbed all.
Knights in armour came and squires,
Swordsmen, archers, every servant
To the lowest, and with tears
Mighty Biorn asked their pardon
For the wrongs of all the years.
And his eyes, once fiercely flaming,
As a girl's were soft and gentle,
And the stern and swarthy face
Now was pallid, sunken, haggard,
Yet adorned with strange new grace.
And the warriors in their armour
Sobbed like children, and around him
Knelt and prayed. God grant that I...
Death may find so sweet and friendly
When mine hour comes to die.

[*Exit. Presently enter SINTRAM.*]

THORA.

Brother, doubly dearest brother,
Welcome ! Yet I fear to grieve thee
With the answer I must give,
Whether, lands and castles leaving,
In the cloister thou may'st live.
For I know thine ardent longing ;
But a voice in prayer hath told me
Years must yet their courses run,
Years in all good deeds abounding,
Ere thy work without is done.
Yet, if faithfully thou servest
Him to whom a thousand summers
Are but as a fleeting day,
Soon will all thy toil be ended,
Quick will speed the years away.
Then thou mayest seek the abbey,
Heart and hands in supplication
Ever raised that God may spare ;
Ever silent night melodious
Making with thy chanted prayer.
Nor is wanting present favour,
Guerdon of thy strife victorious,

Gladsome message comes at last :
Know that all thine evil visions
Now from hence are gone and past.
For in vain hath no man cherished
Trust and patience.

SINTRAM.

Sister dearest,
Thine the patience, thine the trust ;
And thy pleading voice prevailing,
Back the powers of ill hath thrust.

SCENE VIII.—*A Terrace outside SINTRAM'S castle. Summer evening. Distant view of the sea. FOLKO, GABRIELLE, ENGELTRAM, the CHAPLAIN, ROLF (led by a boy). Knights, squires, pages, and servants.*

ROLF.

Early rode away Sir Sintram,
Half a score of troopers with him,
Bent on errand all of peace,
Feud of blood, embittered, ancient,
Utterly to make to cease.

Homeward now he surely rideth ;
 Rest awhile and wait his coming,
 Noble and most welcome guests ;
 Squires and pages in attendance
 Stand around for your behests.

GABRIELLE.

Better place could not be chosen
 Than this lofty castle terrace ;
 Let us watch the heavens glowing
 All with golden light transparent,
 Softly mingling colours showing.
 Ah ! but Rolf, I had forgotten ;
 Hid from thee is outward nature,
 Veiled her splendour from thy sight ;
 Yet within thy soul a brightness
 Fairer gleams than earthly light.

[*Sits and converses with ROLF on one side of the terrace. FOLKO and the CHAPLAIN on the other.*]

FOLKO [*to the CHAPLAIN*].
 Canst thou tell me why the towers,
 Why the walls are all encompassed

With innumerable birds,
Making a melodious circle
That the lofty castle girds?

CHAPLAIN.

'Tis the flock of doves thou seest,
Joyous band of blue-gray warblers;
These have made the towers their own,
Where before for e'en an instant
Never bird to rest was known.
All at once they came and rested
On the towers at the daybreak,
When Sir Sintram rode within,
And from out the castle hastened
All the ministers of sin.
None will harm the gentle inmates,
And they strangely seem protected
From the ravening birds of prey;
Oft o'er Sintram's head they hover,
Love beside him close to stay.
So the castle seems a dovecot,
Yea, and every cleft and crevice,
Ledge and moulding, glisten bright;

With unnumbered fragrant flowers
From the moat to topmost height.
None before for years had blossomed ;
Now amid the birds and flowers
Lives the lord of Drontheim here ;
Nay, and with the doves' soft cooing
Mingle children's voices clear.
For it is the master's bidding,
In the courtyards, in the gardens,
All unhindered they shall play :
See a group of little maidens
Mount e'en now the rocky way.

[Enter ULLA leading a group of peasant
children bearing flowers.]

ULLA [*sings*].

Gentle lady, from the bowers,
From the mountains, bounding, singing,
Hither to the sunlit towers
Haste to come the children, bringing
Tribute of our northern flowers.

FIRST CHILD.

Flowers first I offer blue,
Gentians from the mountain height,

Blue rock-speedwell here for you,
And the northern aconite,
Showing fealty fast and true.

SECOND CHILD.

I will offer flowers red,
Showing love that knows not fear,
Purple gentian's lifted head,
Rosy northern woodbine here,
Vetches too from mossy bed.

THIRD CHILD.

Tribute mine of flowers white,
Spotless purity that show,
Mountain bride that loves the height,
Starry saxifrage aglow,
Reinblom's fairy blossoms bright.

ALL THE CHILDREN.

Gentle lady, from the bowers,
From the mountains, bounding, singing,
Hither to the sunlit towers
We have come to seek thee, bringing
Tribute of our northern flowers.

GABRIELLE.

Tribute such as yours is welcome,
Sweet-voiced children of the Northland ;
Flowers all I love, and those
Rival in their gleaming colours
Lily, hyacinth, and rose.

[*The children bring her the flowers and
she kisses them.*]

ENGELTRAM.

Mother, hark, a bugle sounding
Tells that Sintram draweth near us ;
See from yonder grove of pine
Forth he cometh, and his armour
All like burnished gold doth shine.

GABRIELLE.

'Tis the slanting rays of sunlight
Make the steel as golden armour.

ENGELTRAM.

Mother, yonder floats a cloud
That the pine-trees' pointed summits
With a golden mist doth shroud.

GABRIELLE.

'Tis a cloud of summer evening,
Radiant as though appointed
 Resting-place for angels' feet.
But arise and hasten forward
 Kinsman thine and lord to greet.

[FOLKO, ENGELTRAM, and others
descend to meet SINTRAM, and pre-
sently return with him.]

SINTRAM.

Swiftly riding horseman met me,
Brought me, as I journeyed homeward,
 Tidings of so great a joy,
Like a rosy dream enchanting,
 That grey morning would destroy.
Can it be that, all forgetting,
All forgiving, naught mistrusting,
 Willing ye have sought this shore,
Not unwilling thrust by tempest,
 Folko, Gabrielle, once more ?

FOLKO.

Speak not, Sintram, of forgiveness ;
Years ago thou wert forgiven ;
Not for this we crossed the sea,
But to give thee surest token
 Utmost trust is ours in thee.
For the echo of thy praises,
Like sweet music o'er the waters,
 Oft hath reached our home afar ;
O'er the dark horizon gleaming
 Bright hath shone the northern star.
But from Gabrielle 'tis fittest
Thou should'st take our dearest token,
 Her's the fittest voice to say
What the purpose of our journey,
 What the message of this day.

GABRIELLE [*leading ENGELTRAM forward*].

Engeltram doth stand before thee,
Engeltram, our hope and gladness,
 Engeltram—our only son :
Him we trust unto thy keeping
 Till his boyhood's days are done ;



Teach him all the ways and customs,
Brave and noble, of the Northland ;
Teach him Christian knight to be,
Fearless, faithful, self-despising,
Pure and gentle, like to thee.

[*SINTRAM takes ENGLITRAM by the head, kneels a moment in silent prayer, and then rises.*]

SINTRAM.

Rolf, my friend, the oldest, dearest,
Come and share with me my gladness.

ROLF.

Be the ways of God adored !
Now thou dost Thine aged servant
All in peace dismiss, O Lord.

SINTRAM.

Gabrielle's and Folko's footsteps
May their son unfailing follow—
[*He gazes upwards and speaks in altered voice as if in a trance.*]
Follow surely will, and win,

Through the years it shines upon me,
Victory o'er death and sin.

ENGELTRAM.

Mother, see the cloud that hovers
Over Sintram's head, and showeth
Many-coloured angels' wings.
Father, hear th' entrancing music !
Hark ! it is an angel sings.

[*All gaze upwards at the cloud,
where seven angels are seen in
white garments and with many-
coloured wings.*]

FIRST ANGEL.

To him that overcometh shall be given
The fruit to taste of the celestial tree,
The tree of life, to all that well have striven,
And growing in a garden fair to see,
With verdant foliage ne'er by tempest riven.

SECOND ANGEL.

To him that overcometh, and is found
A faithful servant in the bridegroom's hour,

Shall angels bring, that he be royally crowned,
A garland made of every fragrant flower
That ne'er shall fade or fall upon the ground.

THIRD ANGEL.

To him that overcometh shall appear
The morning star that never dies away,
And from his heart shall pluck out every fear,
And clothe him with the light of endless day,
And brightly beam upon him ever near.

FOURTH ANGEL.

To him that overcometh shall a stole
Be giv'n as white as freshly fallen snow ;
And as he draweth near the long-sought goal,
A mighty angel to all men shall show
His name for ever writ on heaven's scroll.

FIFTH ANGEL.

To him that overcometh there shall sound
A voice so sweet that ne'er he heard before,
And in his ear a new name shall resound
That no man knoweth, and for evermore
The heavenly voice shall compass him around.

SIXTH ANGEL.

And he that overcometh shall be made
A pillar in the temple of our God,
With graces, gifts, beatitudes inlaid ;
And in the courts that no man yet hath trod
Shall dwell for evermore, in joy arrayed.

SEVENTH ANGEL.

And he that overcometh, and the sword
Of love and sorrow welcomed to his heart,
Shall sit upon the throne, and his reward,
Ne'er from his Life and Love to be apart,
Himself no more, but living in his Lord.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Of Him who first man's arch-foe overcame,
And the frail garment of man's nature wore,
And for man's sake unmeasured pain and shame
And inward utter woe unconquered bore,
Be praised for ever the Most Holy Name.

END OF ACT V. AND OF THE DRAMA.

*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
Edinburgh and London*







23498.107

Harvard College Library



FROM THE
SUBSCRIPTION FUND

BEGUN IN 1858



23498.725

Sintram,
Widener Library

003702922



3 2044 086 871 746